Intolerance Over Time

Macro and micro level questions on attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and ethnic minorities

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Contents

Chapter I
Introduction

1.1 Intolerance over Time

People's basic right to express who they are, as long as they abide by the law, is a central statement in most of the documents that have shaped present-day Western societies. From the Constitution of the United States to the *Declaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* of the French Revolutionaries and The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, this tolerance is explicated. The latter even unambiguously wishes for the promotion of tolerance in its Article 26, and most people would agree that tolerance is an important characteristic of democratic societies. Intolerance is an expression of intergroup tensions and can hinder social cohesion, and in its worst form can lead to acts of violence towards people who are not tolerated. Intolerance can take many forms and be directed at various objects. It exists for instance towards other groups in society, towards certain behaviours of these groups, or towards behaviours perceived as immoral in all groups, including one's own. Intolerance is an important characteristic of societies, and studying changes in intolerance over time is a way of addressing the social changes that have shaped the second half of the twentieth century in the Netherlands. In this book I investigate intolerance towards three issues: the practice of euthanasia, the lifestyles of homosexuals and the presence of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. The Netherlands has seen large changes in the aggregate levels of intolerance regarding all three issues. Attitudes on euthanasia and homosexuality have become much more accommodating, whereas aggregate levels of intolerance towards ethnic minorities have increased (Coenders, Lubbers & Scheepers, 2006; Coenders & Scheepers, 1998; Hekma, 2004; Jaspers, Lubbers & De Graaf, 2007; Van de Meerendonk & Scheepers,2004; Weyers, 2002). The changes in the aggregated and individual levels of intolerance are the focus of this study.

Intolerance towards euthanasia, homosexuality and ethnic minorities are related to each other in some respects and even complementary in others. First of all, to say something about generalisability of theories and results it is necessary to study the stability and changes in more than one attitude. I choose three. Although intolerance towards euthanasia, homosexuality and ethnic minorities are in numerous studies part of the same scale – labelled with various terms that include cultural conservatism and authoritarianism (e.g. Middendorp, 1970; Stenner, 2005) – they are clearly not identical. Euthanasia and homosexuality are two central issues in church morality. The combination of attitudes towards homosexuals and ethnic minorities is sometimes considered part of a larger concept of general tolerance towards groups with lifestyles deviating from the majority (Persell, Green & Gurevich, 2001). Not only can I thus identify two distinct clusters within these three issues – one concerning morality, the other concerning outgroup attitudes: the two clusters have separate predictors. Attitudes on euthanasia and homosexuality are strongly influenced by religious beliefs and by integration into religious groups, whereas attitudes towards both homosexuals and ethnic minorities are predisposed by educational attainment (Bobo & Licari, 1989; Coenders & Scheepers, 1998; Coenders & Scheepers, 2008; Davis, 2001; DeCesare, 2000; Gillman, Merrill &

Reid, 1997; Hyman & Wright, 1979; Jelen & Wilcox, 2003; Kraaykamp, 2002; Schumann, Steeh, Bobo & Krysan, 1997;Van de Meerendonk & Scheepers, 2004).

The choice of these three attitudes is also inspired by the idea that I wanted to study attitudes towards issues that have been debated in the Netherlands during the second half of the twentieth century. All these issues have witnessed important changes in legislation. Because I make use of people's memory to explore how attitudes have changed, the issues need to be relevant and current in most people's minds. The three attitudes studied are related both theoretically and empirically in terms of causes and consequences, and in the amount of publicity and political attention they have received. At the same time, it is possible to distinguish the three separately as well as to study them pair-wise.

1.2 Social Change

In this study, I focus on the changes in intolerance towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands, and the explanations for these changes at the macro and micro levels. When studying these sorts of changes and their explanations, one must inevitably deal with concerns about cohorts and periods. This section will first address generational replacement as an explanation for social change. The two meanings of generations and socialisation and their relationship are discussed. Next, I will attend to periodical circumstances and how these can change levels of intolerance. I will then briefly turn to life-cycle or age effects to complement the time-based explanations for observed changes in society and the individual, although age effects are not a primary concern in this book. Finally, I will attend to personal experiences, which, when added up, could also account for some of the observed changes at the societal level.

Numerous sociologists, ranging as far back as Mannheim (1952) in the 1920s, have addressed the importance of generational succession to explain social change. Social change can come about by the disappearance of the elderly and their replacement by younger cohorts with different predispositions and attitudes. Alwin and McCammon (2003) distinguish between generations as a (biological) concept rooted in families and the concept of generations or cohorts as groups in society that share the same formative experiences. Socialisation refers to the two processes involved in these two kinds of generations. The first process of socialisation takes place between generations within families. Parents socialise their children in an attempt to maintain their own worldview, attitudes and beliefs. They try to install in their children a perspective on what is good and should be reached for, and usually hope that their children will value the same ideas they value and will shape their lives according to what the parents find desirable. Socialisation in this sense functions as a buffer against social change, and a source of continuity between generations. The second process of socialisation takes place in society as a whole, between societal groups born in earlier or latter years. Socialisation

in this broader sense refers to the major events and distinctive circumstances that shape the opinions, beliefs and predispositions of cohorts growing up during the same period in history and the lasting impressions these major events and distinctive circumstances have on their lives (e.g. Davis, 2004; Sears & Valentino, 1997). As a rule, the circumstances during one's youth differ from those of the previous generation, and thus socialisation in this broader sense is a cause of social change as younger cohorts gradually replace older ones. While the previous generation in a biological sense, that is the parents, try to prevent social change in values by socialising their children, at the same time social circumstances socialise the new generation in a societal sense away from previous generations. These two forces are further complicated by the fact that biological and societal generations never overlap. Parents differ in timing and spacing of children as well as in fertility rates. To prevent confusion, I will use the term cohorts for the societal meaning of generation, and retain the term generation only for the biological meaning of the word. This book examines both meanings of socialisation: as a buffer against and as a source of social change in intolerance towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities.

Cohorts not only differ in their distinct formative experiences, but also in composition. They can differ in sheer size, such as baby boomers compared to their predecessors, and for that reason alone have a large impact on society. But they can also differ in some important demographic aspects. They can be more ethnically diverse due to an influx of immigrants in the decades before they were born, they can consist of a larger proportion of individuals with a higher education because of a law that was passed before their time or an increase in the demand for skilled workers. They can live longer thanks to better health care or shorter because of epidemics or war, and therefore have shorter- or longer-lasting influences on society. Throughout this book, in the relevant chapters, I distinguish between cohorts as a driving force of social change because of powerful formative experiences, and cohorts as a cause of change because of differences in the composition of successive cohorts. Wherever possible, I identify the relevant formative environment of birth cohorts and model these formative experiences, rather than only include year of birth without any further theoretical consideration.

I started out by stating that in studying changes in attitudes over time one has to deal with both cohorts and periods. The succession of cohorts can only explain gradual changes, or silent revolutions. The first and last birth cohorts at any given time in society would have to differ extremely and be exceptionally large in order to account for more rapid changes in the aggregate (Heath & Martin, 1996). Period effects can explain sudden change, as they signify that everyone in society is affected by historical circumstances at a certain point in time. The concept of period effects conflicts in this way with that of cohort effects. Period effects on levels of intolerance necessarily involve circumstances that affect the attitudes of the entire society and individuals stemming from all cohorts, whereas cohort effects assume at least some stability of attitudes over the life course once they are formed during socialisation. Beyond the long-term

trend that is caused by cohort replacements, short-term fluctuations as a reaction to periodical circumstances can be expected (e.g. Ciabattari, 2001; Kraaykamp, 2002). The starting point of this work is thus to assume that attitudes which were formed during socialisation remain with individuals over their life course to some extent, even as periodical circumstances do influence the attitudes of people of all ages.

The concept that all sociologists, as well as scholars from related fields such as demography or political science, will have missed in my argumentation so far, is that of age. There is a common-sense notion favouring the idea that people grow more conservative as they age, although empirical evidence is not too impressive. Age complements the threesome that is empirically so hard, if not impossible, to differentiate, and this is what makes the distinction between cohort effects and period effects especially complicated and difficult to disentangle. All persons of a certain birth cohort in any given period are of the same age. Hence while their shared formative experiences might make them relatively intolerant, the historical circumstances could be making everyone less intolerant, where at the same time their age may be turning them again in a more intolerant direction. Theoretically it is often possible to differentiate between these three processes, empirically they are harder to distinguish (De Graaf, 1999). When one studies repeated cross sections, as I do in some parts of this book, in any of the surveys used age and cohort are interchangeable and their influences cannot be distinguished. In the panel designs used in other parts, age and period effects can hardly be separated from each other within subsequent cohorts. I will address cohorts, periods and life courses as predictors of attitudinal change, although not always all three simultaneously. Throughout this study, relatively little attention will be paid to age effects, first and foremost because I do not expect attitudes towards homosexuality and ethnic minorities to be particularly vulnerable to the process of ageing. One could imagine a certain resistance to rapid social changes among the elderly, but there is no apparent reason why they would turn more conservative towards for instance homosexuality. Second, because it is not so much ageing which would induce change, but the experience of life events (Treas & Widmer, 2000). The attitude towards euthanasia could change once one has lost loved ones, for instance. Where possible, I will control for these life events, such as marital status, having children or the decease of a spouse, by incorporating them into my models. Furthermore, although ageing could account for some intra-individual changes, it is harder to expect rapid changes of aggregate levels of intolerance caused by the slow demographic process of an ageing population. Finally, my interest in the process of ageing lies not so much in the supposed increase in intolerance, but in the possibly lower susceptibility to attitude change (Visser & Krosnick, 1998). In the final empirical chapter I will address the question whether the elderly change their attitudes towards homosexuality more slowly than the young (cf. Evans, 2002).

A final step taken in this book concerns individual experiences. Social change can be explained by cohort and period effects. Cohort effects assume a relative stability

of values and predispositions across the life course, whereas period effects claim that everybody is vulnerable to change at least to a certain extent. But if period effects are nothing more than an addition sum of individual changes, why could there not also be circumstances that affect only some of the population at a time? (cf. Cunningham, Beutel, Barber & Thornton, 2005) These changes added up could also account for social change if the specific personal circumstances are common enough, especially if there is a change in the number of times these specific personal experiences happen in society. The last part of this book is devoted to these very personal experiences – such as attending a wedding between a majority and minority member, or experiencing the coming out of a friend – that can happen to many individual members of society, separately and individually but at roughly the same time in history, causing attitudinal change.

The chapters that follow this introduction address the influences of socialisation in families and socialisation in historic times on the stability and changes in the Netherlands with respect to intolerance towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities. The power of periodical circumstances in explaining aggregate changes in these attitudes are investigated. I study the effects of individual experiences on changes, finally turning to the question of when over the life course do these individual experiences have the largest impact on changes in the level of intolerance. The central research question of this book reads as follows:

To what extent have Dutch attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities changed, and how can these changes be explained?

The remainder of this introduction briefly focuses on the measurement of attitudes in surveys. This is followed by an overview of the Dutch history in dealing with the three sometimes controversial issues that are subject of the present research. Next, I turn to a description of the chapters in this study, explaining how they are related to the general research question and to each other. The last section of the introduction is devoted to data issues. I will name the various data sources drawn upon in this book, and will address a methodological problem I encountered when working on this thesis, then explain how I solved this by collecting new data, and describe the fieldwork involved.

1.3 Attitudes

Throughout this work intolerance is addressed in a very general sense, as a negative evaluation of euthanasia, homosexuality or the presence of ethnic minorities in Dutch society. Various operationalisations of these three attitudes are used with a very general phrasing of the items, which is not identical for all of the chapters, as many different datasets are employed, each with its unique operationalisations. However, some common concerns regarding the measurement of attitudes need to be addressed first.

The debate on whether people can substantially change attitudes is an ongoing one. Generally, three perspectives on attitudes and their stability can be observed. One is that attitudes are stable traits of an individual and that they do not change after adolescence, perhaps early adulthood (Glenn, 1980; Miller & Sears, 1986). This view is sometimes described as the 'file drawer' perspective on attitudes (Wilson & Hodges, 1992), and is highly congruent with the idea of the lasting impact of socialisation. People acquire an attitude, for instance during socialisation by their parents, which is subsequently stored in a file drawer and readily available each time the drawer is pulled open, for example when people are questioned about their attitudes in a survey. The second perspective divides people into two groups, a small group with stable attitudes and a large group with so-called non-attitudes that show random answer patterns over time (Converse, 1964). This perspective takes on the stability of attitudes only for a knowledgeable elite. The majority of the people who make up a society are considered to have very weakly developed attitudes or even no attitudes at all. This perspective, sometimes referred to as the black-and-white model, has been intensely debated. Inglehart (1990) concludes that although there is significant random error in survey measurement, the stability of latent political and socio-cultural attitudes of the Western public is too impressive to be a mere artificial construct. He argues that although the attitudes people report in a questionnaire may vary, there exists an underlying 'true' attitude which is constant. Panel studies have indeed shown that a large proportion of the population has stable attitudes (e.g. Alwin, Cohen & Newcomb, 1991). A third view perceives attitudes as temporary constructs. People create their attitudes when they are asked to, by evaluating the information that comes to mind at that moment. The information people access can vary between two points in time, for instance due to context, mood, or even the previous question in the questionnaire (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 1999; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973; Zaller, 1992). Although there is evidence that attitudes do vary under different circumstances, there are also many areas in which relative stability of attitudes is observed, such as political attitudes (Bohner & Wänke, 2002). People do not randomly switch between extremes of an attitude towards any given object. Wilson and Hodges (1992) propose that instead of people shifting between attitudes at random each time they are asked to formulate an opinion, they have a bandwidth of acceptable evaluative positions towards a specific issue and move along this part of the attitude continuum depending on the circumstances (cf. Hagendoorn & Sniderman, 2004; Sniderman, Hagendoorn & Prior, 2004). This bandwidth is broader for certain issues than for others. When attitude objects are important to the person, when she already knows a lot about the issue, when she has accessed the attitude often, when cognitive and affective information on the attitude object is consistent – these are all circumstances under which attitudes are more stable.

But did this introduction not start with my aspiration to study attitudinal *change*? Neither of the three perspectives on what attitudes are and how they are arrived at and uttered in a survey seem concerned with actual (individual or aggregate) change

in attitudes towards certain issues – a change that is all too real when we look at the aggregates of attitudes over time, as Inglehart has already pointed out (1990). Variation between respondents over time in reported attitudes can be due to random answer patterns of individuals with weak attitudes, imperfection in the attempts of the researcher to adequately measure the 'true' underlying attitude, or an actual change of attitude. An important indicator for real change is when the means of attitudes systematically change over time (Billiet, Swyngedouw & Waege, 2004). With respect to intolerance towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities, the Netherlands certainly has experienced changes in the aggregate means. Although I take the concerns about measurement of attitudes and attitudinal change seriously, they do not persuade me that the large shifts over time in the Netherlands towards these three issues are caused by measurement error alone.

1.4 A brief history of three issues in the Netherlands

Western societies have witnessed large shifts in public opinion towards moral issues as well as in traditional values since the 1960s (Inglehart, 1977; 2005). The Netherlands is one country where the shift has been particularly large in sexual permissiveness, despite a lack of incidents that could explain such a drastic alteration (NRC, 1991). More recently, attitudes towards Muslims underwent allegedly profound changes after the September 11 attacks and the murders of Islam critics Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh, although empirical evidence is not too impressive. Since the early 1970s, opposition to homosexuality has diminished, opposition towards euthanasia remained relatively stable yet decreasing, and opposition towards ethnic minorities showed has increased (Jaspers, Lubbers & De Graaf, 2007; Coenders & Scheepers, 1998). There is no doubt that the Netherlands has experienced a large amount of change over time. The way Dutch society is shaped has changed with regard to these three issues in recent decades as well, as a cause as well as a consequence of massive shifts in public opinion. Politicians seem to rely more and more on public opinion polls, and although causality is bidirectional when one considers the relation between new laws and regulations and mass opinion, the shifts in aggregate attitudes have without doubt contributed to changing legislation. The changing legislation has influenced the lives of many Dutch and non-Dutch citizens. Same-sex couples were granted the right to marry and are no longer prosecuted if they are under 21. Euthanasia was removed from the penal code, and codes of conduct were developed for physicians. Increased intolerance towards ethnic minorities has negative consequences for social cohesion. The changes in public opinion have led to new prevailing issues on the political agenda, as well as changes in political participation (Inglehart, 1990). This section provides a brief history of the three issues I study, presenting an outline some of the major developments and legal processes as well as some discussions that have taken place regarding these subjects in the Netherlands.

Euthanasia

It was not until after the Second World War that euthanasia as a topic of debate was introduced in the Netherlands. The general opinion then was very negative towards euthanasia, partly because of the newly known Nazi concentration camp practices (van der Sluis, 1977). The first court case in the Netherlands took place in 1952, when a physician had to stand trial for assisting in his tuberculosis-infected brother's death. He was sentenced to one year probation (Weyers, 2002). Between 1970 and 1984 the discussion intensified; a state committee was installed in 1982 to research the pros and cons of euthanasia. In 1984 a bill was proposed by MP Wessel-Tuinstra, but the general belief was that her proposal came too early, as the state committee had not finished its research yet. On July 9, 1985, the state committee on euthanasia proposed changing the law in order to free health professionals from prosecution when they assist in voluntary end-of-life decisions of terminally ill patients in unbearable need (Staatscommissie Euthanasie, 1985). However, the Christian Democrats in government were not willing to remove euthanasia from penal code. In 1988 a government coalition of Christian Democrats and Liberals brought a bill to parliament wherein euthanasia remains criminal, but individual physicians were freed from prosecution if they had acted meticulously (Weyers, 2002). In 1991 Huib Drion, former vice-president of the Supreme Court, suggested a 'suicide pill' that should be available to all elderly Dutch citizens (Hollak, 2000). His suggestion invoked a heated debate, his supporters in the minority. In 2002 euthanasia was removed from the penal code, and under a government of Social-Democrats and Liberals the process of legal change induced more public debate from 2000 to 2003. The debate has flared up from time to time ever since, on topics such as the right of self-determination of terminally ill children versus the rights of parents to decide on the lives of minors.

Homosexuality

Since the introduction of Napoleonic laws in 1811, the Netherlands had had a separation of Church and State, leaving homosexuality morally unwanted and condemned but legally allowed. Homosexuals led a secretive life, usually from within a heterosexual marriage (Hekma, 2004). Christian-Democrat Minister Regout sharpened the Indecency Act in 1911, by adding the minority clause. Sexual acts for same-sex couples were now considered a criminal act until the age of 21, while for heterosexual couples the legal age was set at 16 (Hafkamp, 2004). Homosexuals were persecuted from this point on, with a sad height during the Nazi occupation. In 1946 the Scientific, Cultural, and Relaxation Shakespeare Club (WCOSC) was established as a meeting place for homosexuals. Until the early 1960s the members of the WCOSC led a hidden life, but from 1962 onwards the club openly promoted integration of homosexuals into mainstream society (Duyvendak, 1994). In 1964 the WCOSC changed its name into the 'Dutch Society for Integration of Homosexuality COC'. They fought for the abolition of article 248bis, the minority clause, and for equality (Hekma, Kraakman, van Lieshout &

Radersma, 1989). In 1971 article 248bis was abandoned and in 1973 the COC received Royal recognition. In the thirty years after 1971, homosexuals in the Netherlands gradually emancipated, through a combination of segregation and integration (Duyvendak, 1994). More radical homosexual organisations were founded in the late 1960s and 1970s, proud of their individuality and struggling, not for acceptance in existing society but for the establishment of their own world. In 1982-1983, after violent incidents on Pink Saturday, a homosexual event, the anti-discrimination bill was instated, recognising the rights of (among others) homosexuals not to be discriminated against. The AIDS epidemic in the 1980s led to a renewed focus on the particularities rather than the ordinariness of homosexuals, especially males, since they seemed to be predominantly vulnerable to the virus; this led to a temporary break in integration efforts from the COC. In 1997 same sex-couples were granted the right to be in so-called registered partnerships, very similar to civil marriage. In 2001 civil marriage and the right to adopt Dutch children was expanded to include homosexual couples (Staatsblad, 2001). However, homosexuals still experience individual discrimination or opposition, mostly from strict protestants and Muslims (Lubbers, Jaspers & Ultee, 2006). In 2004 the government evaluated the emancipation of homosexuals and concluded that although legal emancipation is near completion, social acceptance is wavering (Ross, 2004). In 2008, the Netherlands was reprimanded by the European Union for its tolerance of primary schools that ward off homosexual teachers while calling upon their religion.

The presence of ethnic minorities

The Dutch government has long explicitly denied being an immigrant society. Policies from successive governments have stressed the stay of immigrants and guest workers as temporary. They would return to their countries of origin in due time (Lucassen & Penninx, 1995). After the Second World War, immigrants from the (former) colonies formed the major group of newcomers, soon followed by guest workers from Mediterranean countries. As the idea lingered that all these groups were in the Netherlands on a provisional basis, immigrants were expected to adjust as much as necessary to function in Dutch society, but to hold on to their own identity (Tinnemans, 1994). Since the different groups were not considered to have similar needs, policies for the various ethnic groups came from different departments. In the 1970s the theory of temporary residence came under pressure, since real-life experiences proved that immigrants were bringing in their families and planning to stay. The solution of the government was to underline the possibilities of return, illustrated by a bounty upon departure for immigrants. It was not until 1979 that a report of the Scientific Council for Government Policy finally initiated the change towards the idea of permanent residence of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands (Lucassen & Penninx, 1995).

In the 1980s a new group of immigrants starts to arrive: political refugees. The so-called 'guest workers' often had their families that had stayed behind join them, or

married a partner from the country of origin. The big discussions about immigration started at this time (Prins, 2004). Since it now became clear that most immigrants would remain in the Netherlands, the broadly politically supported policy of the preservation of own cultures was criticised heavily. The debate became heated. Hans Janmaat, an elected representative of the extreme right Centre Party and later the Centre Democrats, was perceived as a racist and strongly objected to by members of all other political parties across the spectrum (Coenders, Lubbers & Scheepers, 2006). In the 1990s, Frits Bolkestein was the first reputable politician to address immigration issues in a tone never before accepted by society. The number of refugees that arrived in the Netherlands kept increasing and the problems surrounding concentrations of poorly educated and housed minorities started to come to the surface. Policies shifted in focus towards participation and minority members were increasingly expected to adjust to Dutch society. After the September 11 attacks in 2001 and the murders of populist politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002 and filmmaker Theo van Gogh in 2004, both Islam critics, anti-Muslim sentiments were expressed extensively in the media. Currently, the integration of immigrants is one of the most-often debated issues on the opinion pages, and the discussion continues on school segregation, head scarves, criminality and many other issues. The Netherlands lost its image abroad of a tolerant nation as a consequence of the hardened tone of debate (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, 2007).

1.5 Outline of this thesis

I will now give an overview of the chapters to come. Each of the following chapters will be concerned with stability and change in the Dutch attitudes to one, two or all three of the issues studied. A short description of the central research questions is presented here for all chapters.

Chapter II

The context in which attitudes are formed is often the parental home. This chapter addresses the lasting influence of value socialisation as a mechanism of attitude stability in society by answering the research question, *To what extent do parents affect attitudes of their children, and to what extent does the influence vary with family characteristics?* Parents try to socialise their children into adults with attitudes that parents find desirable, in an attempt to uphold what they value in society. The extent to which they succeed in this transmission varies. In this chapter, I identify characteristics of the family that hamper or facilitate successful reproduction of attitudes. Perfect transmission would leave little room for aggregate changes in attitudes, but since we know that public opinion towards euthanasia, homosexuality and ethnic minorities has altered dramatically, perfectly transmitted stable attitudes between the generations within families are a logical impossibility. However, parents are often considered successful socialisers to some extent, which I test further in this chapter.

Chapters III and IV

Two consecutive chapters investigate to what extent the Dutch aggregate attitudes towards ethnic minorities and homosexuality and towards euthanasia and homosexuality have changed over more than thirty years, between 1970 and 2004. The previous chapter described the more or less successful transmission of attitudes between the generations. Chapters III and IV will address the influences that have altered attitudes. In these chapters I turn to cohorts and periods as explanations. The research questions I aim at answering in Chapters III and IV, respectively, are: *How can changes in the aggregate intolerance towards outgroups in the Netherlands be explained*?, and *How can changes in aggregate Dutch morality regarding euthanasia and homosexuality be explained?* Chapter III studies the changes in ethnic distance as an indicator for objection towards ethnic minorities and the opposition to homosexual lifestyles simultaneously. In Chapter IV changes in the opposition to homosexual lifestyles are compared to the changes in objection towards active euthanasia. The results presented for the objection towards homosexual lifestyles are identical between the two chapters, so the reader will experience some overlap.

Chapter V

Chapter V briefly detours from the research question on stability and change in levels of intolerance of the Dutch, and turns to the recall of attitudes in survey designs. There have been studies on the reliability of individual attitude recall, which typically would assess whether the individual respondent was able to recall a previously stated attitude or not. For me, however, it is more relevant to find out whether using these recalled attitudes for statistical modelling would lead to results different from the ones obtained with a prospective design. I collected additional data for this chapter, describing them in detail in section 1.6 of this introduction. I asked people to recall their attitude towards euthanasia, homosexuality and ethnic minority groups, and to compare these recall data to the attitudes they had stated ten years earlier. I use both the recalled attitudes and the originally measured attitudes to predict attitudinal change as a consequence of personal experiences, to investigate how useful these recalled attitudes can be. The main research question in this chapter is, *Can recalled attitudes be used to make causal inferences about attitudinal change?* Some auxiliary questions are added, such as how reliable the recalled attitudes are on average, whether there are systematic biases in recall, and whether some groups of people are more accurate in their recall than others, based on attitude stability literature and cognitive psychology (e.g. Billiet, Swyngedouw & Waege, 2004; Evans & Heath 1995; Nadeau & Niemi, 1995; Prislin, 1996; Schwarz, 2007; Stocké & Stark, 2007).

Chapters VI and VII

Some people experience extraordinary contexts throughout their lives with respect to the attitudes in this study, for instance when a family member is homosexual, or when

threatened by a member of an ethnic minority group. Chapters VI and VII address these very personal and profound experiences that can invoke attitudinal change. Chapter VI investigates *to what extent negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities increase after having had a negative encounter with a member of an ethnic minority group; and to what extent negative attitudes towards members of ethnic minorities diminish as a result of positive contact experiences.* Chapter VII investigates the change in intolerance towards homosexuals as a consequence of personal experiences with homosexual relatives or friends. Chapter VII moves another step further by asking, *When during the course of people's lives do these personal experiences have the largest influence on people's intolerance towards homosexuals?*

Chapter VIII

The final chapter of this book summarises the findings of the preceding chapters and turns back to the general question posed in this introduction. I suggest some directions research should take to improve on my work, and discuss the implications of my work for future investigations.

1.6 Data

A variety of data sources are used throughout this book. This section briefly describes the data that I employ for each of the chapters, elaborating somewhat on those datasets that I collected myself or in collaboration with others.

For Chapters II, VI and VII I use the Family Survey Dutch Population 2003. The Family Survey is a cross-sectional national survey carried out by the Department of Sociology of Radboud University Nijmegen (De Graaf, De Graaf, Kraaykamp & Ultee, 2003) that contains information on primary respondents and their partners, as well as other selected family members. The survey questionnaire focuses on the life course and circumstances of the Dutch Population. In the oral part of the survey, primary respondents and their partners were asked to provide the names and addresses of their parents, a randomly chosen adult child and a randomly selected sibling. I coordinated the collection of information from siblings, parents and adult children of primary respondents and their partners of the 2003 wave of the survey, by means of a mail questionnaire. After controls of the obtained addresses, the family members received a booklet in the autumn of 2004 with a stamped return envelope. Of the parents who received a mail questionnaire, 79 percent participated and returned the booklet. For siblings and adult children respectively, the response percentages were 57.9 and 63.8.

Chapters III and IV explore the aggregated changes in opposition towards euthanasia, homosexuality and ethnic distance, for which I use the repeated cross-sectional surveys 'Cultural Changes' of the Netherlands Institute for Social Research/SCP as well as two waves of the European Social Survey, with which I cover the 1970-2004 period. I use various waves of the Cultural Changes data, depending on the attitude

studied. For the analyses on homosexuality, I add the two waves of the European Social Survey in the Netherlands, in which the same item was included. To investigate the influences of the macro-level context on changes in intolerance towards euthanasia, homosexuality and ethnic minorities, I include time-varying societal characteristics. I collected some time-series data in various archives, and added information provided by the Central Statistics Office of the Netherlands.

Recalled attitudes voiced by the respondents of the Family Survey Dutch Population 2003 (De Graaf, De Graaf, Kraaykamp & Ultee, 2003) are used in Chapters VI and VII. To validate the results obtained there, I decided to carry out an evaluation of the use of retrospectively measured attitudes in surveys for making causal inferences about attitudinal change. Retrospectively addressing attitudes is generally discouraged in the literature, although evidence is lacking that this would yield spurious results when used for causal modelling (Berney & Blane, 1997; MacDermid, 1989; Yarrow, Campbell & Burton, 1970). I decided to initiate a unique data collection project with would enable me to test the usability of retrospective attitude measurements. I searched for a national survey that had included all three of the issues I study in the past, and found it in the Social Cultural Developments in the Netherlands Survey 1995 (Eisinga, Felling, Konig, Peters & Scheepers, 1996). The initial respondents were relocated via telephone listings and in a second stage with help from the registers of the municipalities they lived in, and were approached again. Table 1 shows the response rates of the follow-up 11 years later (Jaspers & Lubbers, 2007). The response rate of the 1995 survey was approximately 45 percent. A large majority of respondents of the initial survey agreed to a follow-up, a routine question that was included just in case some more information was needed. The initial survey however was never intended to serve as a panel. Of the 1935 respondents who agreed to a follow-up, I could locate 827 with the use of online telephone listings. Another 675 addresses were obtained by writing to all administrations of the municipalities the respondents lived in; they provided in most cases the current addresses of people still living in their municipality, and in some cases also of persons who had moved to another municipality. Due to death, illness or other such circumstances, 58 of the persons I located fell out of the sample. Of the 1446 individuals that formed the net sample, I received 848 questionnaires – a success rate of nearly 60 percent.

I determined to what extent the persons that participated in the panel deviated from the original survey. They do not differ in gender, religiousness or political preference, but there is a deviation with respect to educational attainment. Both the lowest and highest respondents are underrepresented in the second wave. The lower educated were less likely to cooperate a second time when they were approached in 2006. The higher educated were harder to trace, as they tend to move more often and more out of the municipal borders. This is probably also why respondents from big cities were also somewhat underrepresented in the second wave. They tend to move more than people in the countryside. Respondents that were located via telephone listings were more likely to cooperate. Probably because they were more often reached. The addresses

provided by the municipalities were only known first addresses when a move outside the municipal borders had occurred. However, any further moves could not be traced, and respondents that moved more than once outside the municipality they lived in in 1995, never received a questionnaire. Finally, respondents who had shown greater intolerance towards ethnic minorities in 1995 were somewhat less likely to cooperate in 2006.

Table 1.1 Sample and response rates

		Total	Own search	Municipality administrations
SOCON 1995 respondents		**2019**		
refusal to cooperate in future in 1995		84		
subtotal		1935		
Percentage that can be re-approached 2006		**95.8**		
respondents located		1502	827	675
Percentage located of total re-approachable		**77.6**		
refusals,		58	41	17
of which:	- deceased	26	24	2
	- moved	12	2	10
	- ill / demented	15	10	5
	- other reasons	5	5	0
Net sample		**1446**	**787**	**659**
questionnaire returned		848	506	342
non respons		598	281	317
Response percentage		**58.6**	**64.3**	**51.9**
Total response percentage out of all 1995 respondents		**42.0**		

Source: SOCON 1995 and 2006

With the data collected I was now able to form a panel with a first measurement in 1995 and a second one in 2006. I asked people for their current attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities, and invited them to recall their attitudes of ten years earlier. With these data I was able to investigate to what extent recalled attitudes can be used for my study of attitude change.

Chapter II
Transmission of Intolerance: Parent-child attitude similarities[1]

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the extent to which attitudes are transmitted between generations in the Netherlands. Socialisation as the source of continuity between generations and a buffer for social change has received much attention for more than a century (Beck, Bruner & Dobson, 1975; Giddings, 1897; Jennings & Niemi, 1981). Every socialisation theory gives importance to the transmission of values, beliefs, traditions and attitudes from parents to children, both through deliberate actions and reactions and through non-verbal communication and examples. Such influences from parents to children are considered important factors in the formation of attitudes (Dalhouse & Frideres, 1996; Jennings & Niemi, 1981). The parental influence on attitudes towards three issues that have been causing controversy in the Netherlands are the subject of the present research; these attitudes involve homosexuality, euthanasia and the presence of ethnic minorities. I investigate the influence of parents on their children's attitudes towards these issues, and study to what extent successes in transmission are dependent on family characteristics. In doing so, I am able to address the influence of socialisation depending on family relations and family composition. The central research question of this chapter reads: *To what extent do parents affect attitudes of their children, and to what extent does the influence vary with family characteristics?*

Research on attitude similarity between generations is not new. The transmission of intolerance towards ethnic minorities between generations in the Netherlands has been previously addressed (Hello, 2003), as well the inheritance of cultural and economic conservatism (Vollebergh, Iedema & Raaijmakers, 1999), voting behaviour (Need, 1997) and the similarities between mothers and children in the rejection of same-sex marriage (Lubbers, Jaspers & Ultee, 2006). I will however improve on existing research on the intergenerational transmission of attitudes in two ways. First, by studying the facilitating or hampering characteristics of the family for the transmission of attitudes. By taking family relations as well as family composition into account in my research, I am able to define conditions under which parents are more or less successful in influencing their children's attitudes. Second, I will study the similarities between parents and children in three different attitudes, to test the generalisability of socialisation effects. I chose attitudes towards homosexuality, towards euthanasia and towards ethnic minorities. All of these are topics of debate in the Netherlands, and have been so for the last few decades. I deliberately chose to investigate subjects more and less influenced by religious beliefs, in order to control for religious pressures. Furthermore, these issues have seen conflicting trends in public support in the Netherlands, which could lead to differences in the influence parents have had on their children between the three attitudes.

[1]A different version of this chapter was published in the *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* (Jaspers, Lubbers & De Vries, 2008). An earlier version was presented at the Conference of the International Sociological Association in Durban, South Africa, in July 2006.

2.2 Expectations

Most parents go to great lengths to provide their offspring with a moral base they believe is just. They socialise their children to become the adults they want them to be. This socialisation is the core of the present research. The question is to what extent are they successful in influencing their children. Previous research has shown both similarity and dissimilarity in values (Jennings & Niemi, 1981; Moen, Erickson & Dempster-McClain, 1997). Many of these studies have focused on similarities between parents and adolescents. I study the influences parents have on their *adult* children's attitudes – in other words, I argue that a long-term effect of the family socialisation process is indicated by the values and behaviours of adult children.

There are two reasons why the influence of parents on their adolescent children might differ from the influence of parents on adult children. Adolescents are often in a process of breaking loose from their parents, which could lead to intentional dissimilarity in their attitudes. On the other hand, most adolescents live with their parents and they might be much more influenced by them than adult children living outside the parental home or have a desire to avoid conflict in the house. Knowledge about the influence of the parents on adolescent children therefore does not provide much insight into the influence at a later stage. My focus lies on influences of parental attitudes during socialisation on the attitudes of their adult children.

Causes of intergenerational attitude similarity

I make use of two major perspectives on the influence of parental attitudes on children's. The first perspective discussed is that of *socialisation* (Glass, Bengtson & Dunham, 1986). From the socialisation perspective, the cause of the influence of parents on children is that the latter are being taught what to think by their parents. Adult children have certain attitudes because they have learned that these were just, and this is now also what they believe. The attitudes of the parents shape the attitudes of the children (Barber, 2000). There has been an ongoing debate on the lasting or fading influence of socialisation on attitudes over the life course. Some researchers argue that the amount of change is extremely small after a certain age is reached; others claim that, although levels of change are highest for young adults and the elderly, changes take place over the entire lifetime (Alwin & McCammon, 2003; Glenn, 1980; Visser & Krosnick, 1998). The heart of socialisation takes place during the formative years; although no definite ages for this phase have been set, it is commonly accepted that adolescents are the most susceptible to attitude formation (Alwin & Krosnick, 1991; Jennings & Niemi, 1978). The attitudes of teens after socialisation then remain either constant over the life course, partly because of environmental continuity throughout the life span (Miller & Sears 1986), or undergo some change, depending on the perspective one holds in the continuity-versus-change debate. The hypothesis reads: *Parents' past attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities influence their children's present attitudes towards these topics (H1).*

A second perspective on intergenerational similarities in attitudes is the idea that children do not as much inherit their parents' attitudes, as they do their parents *structural positions* (e.g. Hello, 2003; Vollebergh, Iedema & Raaijmakers, 1999). These hereditary structural positions include educational attainment, which has been proven an important predictor of many attitudes, including those in the present study (Coenders & Scheepers, 1998; DeCesare, 2000; Hyman & Wright, 1979; Jelen & Wilcox, 2003; Loftus, 2001). The research on the processes of intergenerational transmission of educational attainment and status was initially developed in the 1960s (Blau & Duncan, 1967), and has received much academic attention ever since. In many ways, parents influence the status positions their children will achieve (De Graaf, De Graaf & Kraaykamp, 2000). Parents hence affect adult children's attitudes through the adult children's educational attainment, for which the parents are partly responsible. In this view, similarities in attitudes between parents and their adult children can be explained by identical or closely related social positions. The present research controls for status positions of both parents and children. *Part of the influence parents have on their children's attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities is due to the inheritance of structural positions from parents (H2).*

Not all children remain exclusively in similar environments as they age. Most children leave their parents' home as they get older, only to increasingly encounter dissimilar influences, for instance from partners and colleagues (Glass et al., 1986). These new institutions socialise the children as well. Although these new sources tend to have norms and attitudes that are somewhat similar to the parents' – since the parents are partly responsible for the paths their children follow and the persons they meet along the way – it is expected that the more children are socialised by others, the less they will resemble their parents (Kelley & De Graaf, 1997; Mortimer & Simmons, 1978). This leads, from the perspective of the parents, to a similarity paradox: they want their children to be upwardly mobile, but this mobility also increases the chance of the child having different attitudes. The gradual estrangement of the child from its parents implies that children resemble their parents less in attitudes as the children age. *The older the respondent, the smaller the influence of the parents' attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities on the children's attitudes (H3).*

Family characteristics and parent-to-child attitude influences

There are indications that not all children are equally successfully socialised by their parents, in terms of parent-to-child attitude influences. Girls are supposedly more susceptible to their parents' attitudes than boys (Bao, Whitbeck, Hoyt & Conger, 1999; Trevor, 1999). Girls are usually taught to be more obedient and submissive than boys, therefore they incorporate their parents' attitudes to a greater extent than their brothers – the latter being taught to be more independent. Girls are usually socialised in a more 'narrow' way (Arnett, 1995) that emphasises conformity instead of individualism and self-expression. We hypothesise the following: *Women will be*

influenced more by their parents' attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities than men (H4).

Parents with many children are often unable to pay as much attention to each child individually as parents with one or two children (Smith, 1984). Parents might be more actively involved with the individual moral development of the children in a small family, whereas parents of large families might need to spend more time and energy on the management of the household. Consequently, *The smaller the number of siblings, the more a child will be influenced by its parent's attitudes (H5).*

The transmission of attitudes will also be more effective in loving circumstances. Having a good relationship facilitates transmitting attitudes from parent to child (Arnett, 1995). It is the child's perception of the relationship which matters most (Bao et al., 1999). If a child perceives the relationship as warm and trusting, chances are that this child will value the same things as its parents. If the child perceives the relationship as very bad, chances are that the child will continue to react against its parents' values throughout adult life. I expect that *Children who report a warm family environment are more influenced by their parents in their attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities (H6).*

Not all parents are equally successful in transmitting their values. Contrary to their expectations, Acock and Bengtson (1978) find that it is not fathers but mothers who exert the largest influence on their children's orientations. It has been proposed that mothers are usually more successful, as they tend to spend more time with their children and are more concerned with their upbringing (Bao et al., 1999). The higher frequency of interaction with the child gives the mother more control over the influences the child is exposed to and more opportunity to exchange ideas. I hypothesise that *Mothers have a larger influence on their children's attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities than fathers (H7).*

Attitudes of the parents towards the three issues may be less clear when parents differ in opinions. Children of parents with opposite opinions on euthanasia, homosexuality or the presence of ethnic minorities receive mixed messages during socialisation. For these children, a simple transmission of parental attitudes is impossible. It could be that the average attitude of the parents is what is transmitted in this situation. However, one of the parents, most likely the mother, could be dominant in influencing the child's attitude. *Children whose parents differ in their attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities are less influenced by their parents' attitudes than children whose parents have similar opinions (H8).*

2.3 Data

To test the hypotheses, I make use of the Family Survey Dutch Population 2003 - FNB 2003 (De Graaf, De Graaf, Kraaykamp & Ultee, 2003). FNB 2003 is a cross-sectional national survey among the Dutch-speaking population of the Netherlands, ages 18-70. Part of the sample was a random selection of respondents from the Dutch postal service. A smaller part consisted of a sample of respondents in the research panels of the interviewing agency. Residents of the four largest Dutch cities were over sampled in the latter. Primary respondents and their spouses were interviewed in the winter of 2003-2004. The number of respondents is 2,174; however, for the analysis of each dependent variable we selected only those respondents with valid measurements on the respective dependent variable. This means that the analyses for the *attitude towards euthanasia* were performed on 1740 respondents, for the *attitude towards homosexuality* on 1839 respondents, and for the *attitude towards ethnic minorities* on 1735 respondents. For the latter, respondents of non-Dutch origin were also excluded. Response rate of the total survey is 52.6, which is reasonably high for the Netherlands.

All respondents of the initial survey were asked to provide name and address of their parent(s) and one randomly selected sibling. In approximately one-third of the cases, these addresses were supplied to the interviewer. All parents and siblings that were assigned by their relatives, and whose addresses could be verified, were mailed a questionnaire in the fall of 2004. The parents were sent one questionnaire only. When there were two parents living at the same address, they themselves decided who filled out the booklet. In this chapter the data from the primary respondents is used, as well as the data provided by one of their parents and the randomly selected siblings. The response rate of parents was 79 percent; 476 Parents returned a completed questionnaire. The response rate for siblings was lower, at 57.9 percent, resulting in 367 completed questionnaires.

Dependent variables

Questions on the attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities of the respondents were phrased in very general terms, to facilitate recollection of attitudes of the parents. The exact wordings were (translated from Dutch): *We present you a few issues on which opinions diverge. How do you feel about the following subjects?* Response categories ranged from *strongly approve* to *strongly disapprove.* I also included other items for the three dependent variables. Table 2.1 shows the frequencies for the items of the dependent attitudes and the standardised factor loadings in a Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) measurement model. For euthanasia I included in addition the item *'Someone who is old and ill and who no longer wants to live should have the right to ask a physician for a painless death'.* With respect to homosexuality I included two more items apart from the general attitude: *'Gay marriage should be abolished';* and *'Same-sex couples should have the same rights regarding the adoption of children as ordinary couples'.* Next to the general attitude towards the presence of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands I included one more item, *'I sometimes worry that my neighbourhood will deteriorate due to the arrival of ethnic minorities'.* All dependent items were measured on a five-point Likert scale and have been recoded so that a higher score indicates more opposition towards an issue.

Table 2.1 Frequencies and factor loadings for dependent variables

	% (Strongly) Approving / Agreeing	% Neutral	% (Strongly) Disapproving / Disagreeing	N	λ
Attitude towards euthanasia					
general attitude	60.1	26.6	13.4	1740	.898
should a doctor give a lethal injection when asked?	74.8	10.3	14.9	1740	.807
Attitude towards homosexuality					
general attitude	48.2	38.3	13.5	1839	.794
homosexuals should have same rights adoption	55.7	15.2	29.1	1839	.774
gay marriage should be abolished	66.6	17.7	15.7	1839	.843
Attitude towards ethnic minorities					
general attitude	33.7	49.9	16.4	1735	.753
concern about deterioration neighborhood when ethnic minorities come to live here	42.5	32.5	25.0	1735	.599

Source: FNB 2003; all dependent variables have been recoded so that a higher score indicates more opposition towards this issue.

The attitudes towards euthanasia are very approving. Attitudes towards homosexuals are more opposed than is often found in the Netherlands. The Netherlands is known for its unusual tolerant stance towards homosexuals. Kelley reports most Dutchmen to find nothing wrong at all with homosexual behaviour (Kelley, 2001). Table 2.1 shows that approximately one-eighth of the population disapproves of it, whereas close to half of the respondents approves of homosexuality in general. Despite the item on general attitude towards homosexuality showing more variance than is often found in the Netherlands, it correlates strongly with the other items on homosexuality that are available in the data. Moreover, factor analysis shows that all items on homosexuality in the data form a one-dimensional scale. Most reservations are found for the attitude towards the presence of ethnic minorities. A large part of the Dutch population appears to have a nuanced opinion, with less than half positive towards this issue.

Explanatory variables

Table 2.2 shows descriptives for the explanatory variables for each of the three analyses separately. *Gender* and *age* of the respondent were asked. Respondents were provided with a list, to fill in their educational attainment. *Educational attainment* was then collapsed into five categories, ranging from (some) primary school to one or more university degrees. *Number of siblings* was asked. *Church attendance* was measured on a five-point scale from (almost) never to more than once a week. Further, a scale was constructed for the level of *emotional warmth from the parents* respondents remember from their primary school period. The scale consists of four items that form the Emotional Warmth subscale of the EMBU (Swedish Acronym for 'My memories of Upbringing') (Arrindell et al., 1999). Cronbach's alpha for these four items is .84. *Educational attainment of the parents* is based on the answers from the primary respondents, and collapsed into five categories. Respondents were asked which opinions their mother and father had about euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities, back when respondents were in their teens. Parents were asked how they felt about these three issues when their child was approximately 15. The wording of the questions was similar to the wording for the primary respondents. For respondents whose parents returned a questionnaire, we have either the mother's or father's *attitude towards euthanasia, attitude towards homosexuality* and *attitude towards ethnic minorities* at age 15 of the child as reported by the parent. For respondents whose siblings returned a questionnaire we also have the attitude of the father and mother towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities as reported by the sibling. In general, parents consider themselves to have been more positive towards the three issues than both respondent and sibling perceive them to have been. However, the averages shown in Table 2.2 clearly do not represent identical groups. Higher educated parents, parents with higher socio-economic status, and parents of whom the child reported a warm upbringing style were more likely to cooperate with the mail questionnaire. Especially the oldest respondents will no longer have parents who could have filled out the questionnaire, and these parents will likely have been the most conservative.

Table 2.2 Descriptive Statistics for Explanatory Variables

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
for the analyses on the child's opposition to euthanasia			
mother's attitude – respondent report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)[a]	1613	3.25	1.16
mother's attitude – sibling report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	288	3.19	1.16
mother's attitude – mother report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	198	3.09	1.10
mother's educational attainment (1-5)	1688	2.01	1.09
mother's church attendance (0-4)	1718	1.79	1.49
gender (male=1)	1740	.49	.50
age (18-77)	1740	42.27	12.44
educational attainment (1-5)	1740	3.15	1.36
church attendance (0-4)	1740	.82	1.17
number of siblings (0-17)	1740	2.93	2.45
warm family environment (1-5)	1736	3.83	.83
for the analyses on the child's opposition to homosexuality			
mother's attitude – respondent report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	1738	3.40	1.00
mother's attitude – sibling report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	311	3.29	1.10
mother's attitude – mother report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	208	3.05	.93
father's attitude – respondent report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	1692	3.64	.95
father's attitude – sibling report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	300	3.58	1.05
father's attitude – father report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	182	3.17	.91
mother's educational attainment (1-5)	1781	1.99	1.09
mother's church attendance (0-4)	1816	1.76	1.49
father's educational attainment (1-5)	1756	2.30	1.32
father's church attendance (0-4)	1787	1.65	1.52
gender (male=1)	1839	.49	.50
age (18-77)	1839	42.53	12.54
educational attainment (1-5)	1839	3.12	1.35
church attendance (0-4)	1839	.80	1.16
number of siblings (0-17)	1839	2.92	2.45
warm family environment (1-5)	1835	3.82	.83
for the analyses on the child's opposition to the presence of ethnic minorities			
mother's attitude – respondent report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	1626	3.05	.80
mother's attitude – sibling report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	294	3.02	.90
mother's attitude – mother report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	203	3.00	.74
father's attitude – respondent report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	1591	3.16	.83
father's attitude – sibling report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	289	3.23	.94
father's attitude – father report (1-5; very approving-very disapproving)	179	2.92	.75
mother's educational attainment (1-5)	1690	2.00	1.08
mother's church attendance (0-4)	1714	1.76	1.48
father's educational attainment (1-5)	1668	2.32	1.32
father's church attendance (0-4)	1687	1.64	1.51
gender (male=1)	1735	.49	.50
age (18-77)	1735	42.42	12.35
educational attainment (1-5)	1735	3.16	1.35
church attendance (0-4)	1735	.80	1.15
number of siblings (0-17)	1735	2.92	2.45
warm family environment (1-5)	1731	3.83	.83

Source: FNB 2003; [a] father's attitude was not included in the analysis

Table 2.3 shows the correlations between fathers' and mothers' report on their attitude and respondents' report on this specific parent's attitude. The perception of the parental attitude of the child correlates more strongly with that of the recollected attitude of the mother than with the recollected attitude of the father. Respondents may remember their mother's attitude better than their father's. Previous research found stronger recollection correlations between children and parents concerning church membership (0.70), self-employment (0.81), right-wing party preference (0.75) and cultural consumption (0.67) (De Vries, 2006). The correlation between children's perception and mothers' report on the attitude towards homosexuality and euthanasia is 0.585 and 0.566 respectively. The correlation is particularly weak between fathers' attitude towards ethnic minorities and the children's report (0.346).

Table 2.3 Correlations between Respondent's Report on Attitudes of Her Father and Mother and the Parent's Report on the Same Attitude

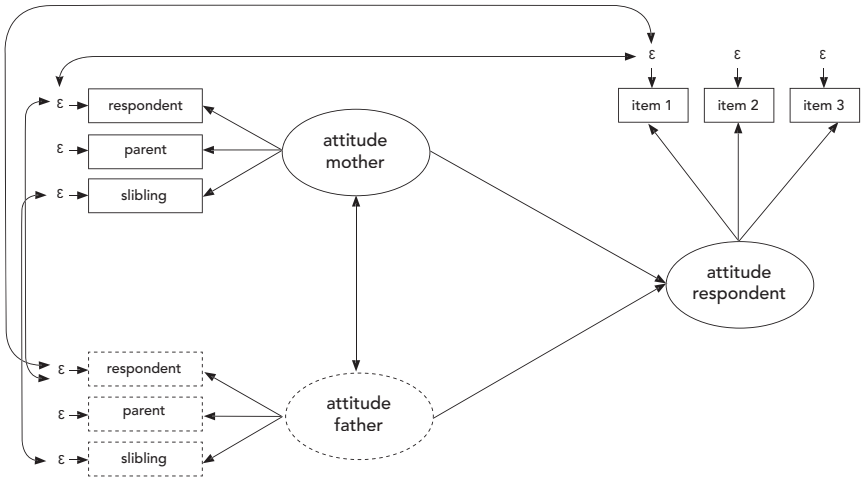
	father's own report	mother's own report
respondent report on parental attitudes towards euthanasia	.523***	.585***
respondent report on parental attitudes towards homosexuality	.411***	.566***
respondent report on parental attitudes towards ethnic minority members	.346***	.478***

****=p < .001,*
Source: FNB 2003

Modelling strategy

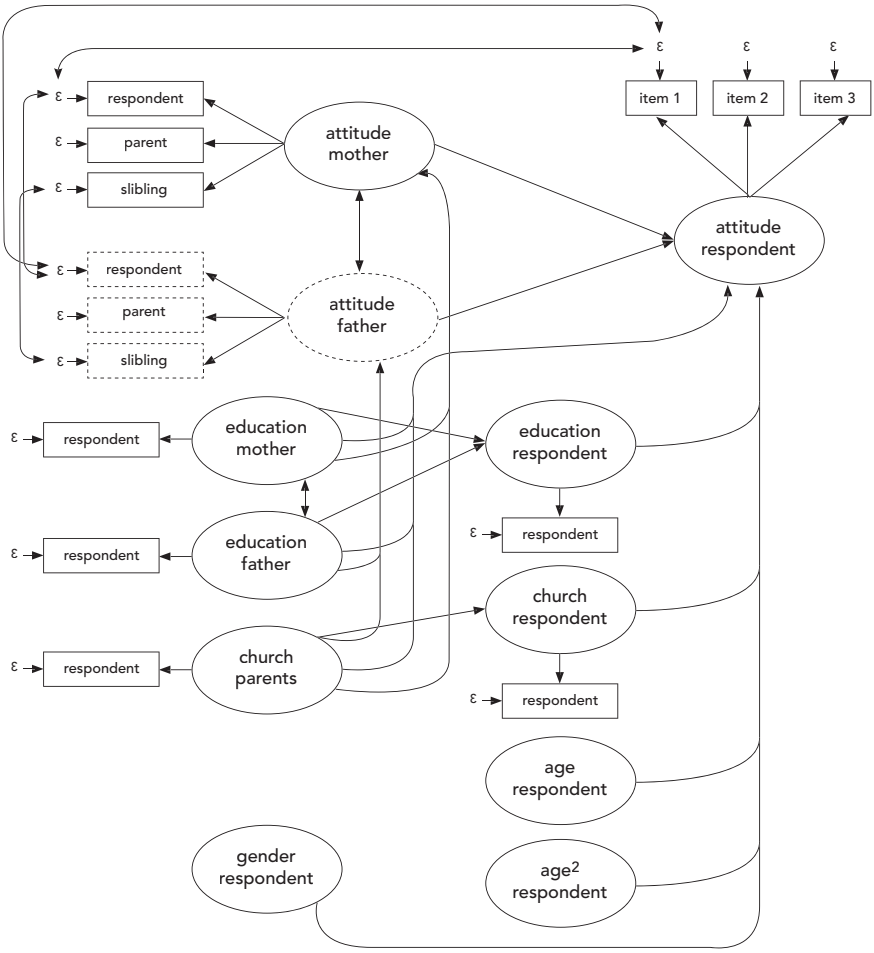
Two structural equation models for each dependent attitude are estimated, followed by interactions added to the first model. First I estimate a simple model, wherein the influence from parental attitudes on the attitudes of the children at age 15 is calculated. Figure 2.1 shows this model. Lines are dotted when the effects of these variables are not estimated for all three dependent attitudes. The respondents' attitude towards homosexuality is measured with three instead of two items. For the attitude towards euthanasia it was not possible to estimate the simple model because of multicollinearity between the attitudes of both parents, therefore I estimate a model with only the mother's attitude for the attitude towards euthanasia. For the other two cases, information is included on – and from – both parents. I allow for error correlation between both the siblings' report on the attitude of the father and the mother, and between the respondents' report on the father and the mother, since these measures stem from a single two-step question on parental attitudes. I also allow for error correlation between the general measure of respondents' attitude and their report on both parents. The wording and source of these measures are identical.

Figure 2.1 Simple estimation model for parent-child attitude transmission



Second, I estimate a model with structural characteristics of both parents and children for all three attitudes. Figure 2.2 shows this model. Again, for the attitude towards euthanasia, only the mother's attitude and not the father's at age 15 of the child is included as an explanatory variable. For parental church attendance at age 15 of the child I include the highest of the items for the father's and mother's church attendance. The effects of the structural characteristics of the parents on the parental attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities are included in the models. Results for these effects can be found in Appendix 2A. All psi's are left free in the models, for instance between church attendance and educational attainment. For reasons of graphic complexity, these arrows are not drawn in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 Full estimation model for parent-child attitude transmission



Third, I look at interactions between selected explanatory variables and the mother's attitudes by applying a multiple group approach. I use the simple model as the base model, and consecutively add and delete all grouping variables. The same is done for the father's attitude. Results for the socialisation influence of the father are very similar to those for the mother, and can be found in Appendix 2B.

Missing values

I selected only those respondents who provided valid information on their own attitudes, but I do have missing values for the explanatory variables. Most missing values concern the parental and sibling information on parental attitudes, due to four

reasons. First, not all respondents have a parent or sibling who is alive. Especially the older respondents do not have living parents. Second, respondents did not always give permission to send a questionnaire to a parent or a sibling. This often happened when respondents had older parents, who were likely in ill health. Third, not all parents and siblings returned the questionnaire they received. Fourth, some of those who did return the questionnaire did not answer the questions about attitudes.

I cope with the missing values by using Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML), a method that looks at the patterns of missing values for the variables (Enders, 2001). Though no values are imputed for the missing values, likelihoods of values and covariances are estimated on the basis of the missing value patterns and the values on the other variables. This method gives reliable results if data are at least missing at random (MAR). Hence the fact that missing values are more frequent among older respondents does not lead to a bias.

Biases

Due to the nature of the data collection, I am bound to find some biases in recollection of attitudes. Both the parents and the children report on a past time. Parents are asked for their attitudes towards homosexuality, euthanasia and ethnic minorities at a time when their child was approximately 15. The children had to report on their parents during their teenage years. Both measurements will be flawed to some extent. The nature and level of the biases are debatable (De Vries, 2006; Schachter, 2002). However, we do expect parents to report past attitudes that are biased by their current attitudes. Similarly, I expect some bias in the children's report, as they report on someone else. Because of the distinction they make between themselves and the person they answer questions on, one could expect them to show a bias away from their own current attitudes. However, previous results indicate that parental influence works via the perception of parental attitude (Acock & Bengtson, 1980). Stated attitudes of the parents are of lesser influence than the attributed attitudes children perceive. Children tend to see their parents as more dissimilar to themselves than parents state, whereas the influence of the attributed attitudes is larger than the attitudes stated by the parents. To check for a possible corruption of my results because of respondents reporting on their parents' attitudes, I repeated the simple model for a sub-sample of respondents whose parent or sibling (or both) cooperated. I get very similar results, although the effects of parental attitudes are slightly smaller.

Some of the structural information on the parents was retrospectively provided by the adult children. De Vries (2006) determined the amount of measurement error involved in the accounts of adult children in the Netherlands on their fathers' level of education and church attendance when they were 15. I set the error terms of parental educational attainment and parental church attendance in our models to his results for fathers' educational attainment and fathers' church attendance.

2.4 Results

The results for the simple model are presented in Table 2.4. Parents have a large influence on their children's attitudes via their own attitudes. The mother's influence is larger than the father's influence in models that include both parents. We also show the psi-value between mothers' and fathers' attitudes. For the attitude towards homosexuality, there is more similarity between the parents than for the attitude towards ethnic minorities. The effect of mothers' attitude towards euthanasia on the adult child's attitude is .689. The mother's effect can be seen to decrease in homosexuality (.429) and ethnic minorities (.351) when the father's attitude is included, mainly due to correlation between the two.

Table 2.5 shows the results for the full models. Parental influences are still present when controlling for structural characteristics of both parents and children, a finding that confirms my expectation. Church attendance of the parents has a positive effect on fathers' disapproval of homosexuality (results for structural effects on parents' attitudes can be found in Appendix 2A) and a positive effect on church attendance of the respondent (not shown in table). Fathers' attitude towards homosexuality then has a positive effect on respondents' attitude, while simultaneously church attendance of the respondent has a positive influence on the respondent's disapproval of homosexuality.

Table 2.4 Effects of parental attitudes at age 15 of the child on adult children's disapproval of homosexuality, euthanasia and ethnic minorities

	Disapproval of euthanasia			Disapproval of homosexuality			Disapproval of ethnic minorities		
	b	s.e.	beta	b	s.e.	beta	b	s.e.	beta
Parental characteristics									
father's attitude				.308	.118	.265**	.273	.095	.286**
mother's attitude	.689	.061	.672***	.429	.106	.395***	.351	.091	.329***
Chi-square			1.98			33.26			16.77
Df			3			20			13
RMSEA			.034			.019			.013
Explained variance			.452			.400			.313
N			1740			1839			1735

psi (father's attitude, mother's attitude) for homosexuality .398 (.041); and for ethnic minorities .265 (.050)

****=p < .001; **=p < .01; *=p < .05; ~=p <.10*
Source: FNB 2003

Table 2.5 Effects of Parental Attitudes, Parental Background and Respondents' Characteristics on Opposition to Homosexuality, Euthanasia and Ethnic Minorities

	Disapproval of euthanasia			Disapproval of homosexuality			Disapproval of the presence of ethnic minorities		
	b	s.e.	beta	b	s.e.	beta	b	s.e.	beta
Parental characteristics									
father's attitude				.443	.133	.349***	.334	.113	.292**
mother's attitude	.753	.112	.680***	.416	.119	.363***	.351	.103	.306***
father's educational attainment				.055	.039	.080	-.023	.038	-.043
mother's educational attainment	.083	.037	.083*	.037	.047	.044	.059	.045	.090
parents' church attendance	-.091	.037	-.132**	-.080	.024	-.141***	.007	.017	.015
Respondent characteristics									
man	-.006	.045	-.003	.229	.038	.146***	.137	.034	.111***
age	-.027	.007		-.026	.006		-.032	.006	
age2	.0003	.0001		.0003	.0001		.0005	.0001	
educational attainment	-.027	.019	-.039	-.057	.017	-.098***	-.104	.016	-.230***
church attendance	.233	.034	.291***	.181	.024	.267***	-.026	.017	-.057~
Chi-square			104.66			113.27			94.99
Df			24			68			53
RMSEA			.044			.019			.021
Explained variance			.602			.562			.434
N			1740			1839			1735

****=p < .001; **=p < .01; *=p < .05; ~=p <.10*
Source: FNB 2003

The direct effects of parental structural characteristics on children's attitudes have somewhat unexpected signs, when controlled for parental attitudes. Respondents with religious parents, for instance, are less opposed to euthanasia and homosexuality. I calculated the effects of religion on opposition to homosexuality for adult children who were never members of a church (.00); for adult children who became disaffiliated but were once members (.32); for respondents who were not religious as children but

became religious later in life – a small group – (.72); and for adult children who have been church members their entire lives (.40). Those who joined a church only later in life are most opposed. These are probably very devout members who are highly motivated to live according to church morality. Adult children who belonged to a church throughout their lives are more opposed than those who never were members of any church. However, those who were once members and later became disaffiliated show the lowest level of intolerance towards homosexuality. For this group, disagreeing with the norms of their church might have been a reason to leave the congregation.

Respondents' structural characteristics have effects on their attitudes that are similar to those in other research. Men are more opposed to homosexuality and ethnic minorities, whereas a higher educational attainment leads to less disapproval of homosexuality and ethnic minorities yet has no effect on euthanasia. Respondents' church attendance has a positive effect on the opposition towards euthanasia and homosexuality, but no effect on attitude towards ethnic minorities. There is a negative curvilinear link between respondents' age and all three attitudes.

Interactions

Table 2.6 shows the results of the multiple group modelling. The results are very similar for the three attitudes, indicating their validity across attitudinal domains. The first interaction hypothesis is falsified. Women are not more influenced by their mothers' attitude than men. For the attitude towards ethnic minorities, I found that men are more influenced by both their mother and their father than women (latter result can be found in Appendix 2B). Older respondents are less influenced by their parents than younger respondents. Although it seems that the older people get, the more their parents' influence diminishes, one cannot be sure that this is the mechanism at work. Since I cannot distinguish between respondents' age and birth cohort, it is possible that younger generations are more influenced by their parents than older generations. Coming from a warm family improves the transmission of attitudes from both parents to their children for all three attitudes, as I expected. The structure of the sibling set is of no influence at all. Whether there are more or fewer siblings does not matter for parent-child attitude transmission. My hypothesis on the difference of opinion between parents is supported by the findings. When parents differ in their attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities they are less successful in influencing their adult children's attitudes on these issues. Again, this finding is consistent across all three attitudes.

Table 2.6 Interaction Effects with Family Characteristics for the Influence of Maternal Attitude towards Euthanasia, Homosexuality, and Ethnic Minorities, b coefficients

		Disapproval of euthanasia (N=1740)		Disapproval of homosexuality (N=1839)		Disapproval of the presence of ethnic minorities (N=1735)	
Gender:	female	.720		.659		.534	
	male	.702		.614		.684	
Chi-square difference test (1 df)		.088		.418		3.617	~
Age:	< 40 years old	1.016		.979		.714	
	> 40 years old	.530		.537		.538	
Chi-square difference test (1 df)		50.179	***	26.691	***	3.413	~
Warm family:	weak	.598		.549		.493	
	strong	.795		.688		.674	
Chi-square difference test (1 df)		10.551	**	4.151	*	5.304	*
Siblings #	<= 2	.665		.626		.621	
	>= 3	.810		.761		.642	
Chi-square difference test (1 df)		3.828	~	2.478		.100	
Difference in parental attitude:	yes	.350		.438		.292	
	no	.909		.785		.667	
Chi-square difference test (1 df)		50.381	***	18.266	***	26.238	***

****=p < .001; **=p < .01; *=p < .05; ~=p <.10*
Source: FNB 2003

2.5 Summary and discussion

Parent's attitudes clearly influence how their adult children will think on a number of issues. I showed that this is the case in the Netherlands for the attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities. Mothers have a larger influence on their children's attitudes than fathers. I also identified some characteristics of families that might ameliorate the transmission of attitudes from parents to children. An overview of the hypotheses and results is given in Table 2.7. Effects reported here did not differ by gender. The effect of parental attitude on the present attitudes is comparable for girls and boys. The idea of broad socialisation for boys and narrow socialisation for girls is not supported by the findings. The emotional warmth in the family, as perceived by the child, facilitates the transmission of all three attitudes. For respondents who remember their youth with their parents as emotionally warm, the effect of the parental attitude is greater. I may conclude from this finding that caring

parents are better able to imprint their own attitudes on their children. On the other hand, people who perceived their parents as less caring may widen the distance between themselves and their parents, coming to believe that they differ markedly from their parents in terms of attitudes. The number of siblings has no effect on the transmission of attitudes.

Table 2.7 Overview of Hypotheses and Results

H1	Parents' attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minority members in the past influence their children's present attitudes towards these topics.	+
H2	Part of the influence parents have on their children's attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minority members is due to hereditary structural positions.	+
H3	The older the child, the smaller the influence from the parents' attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minority members on the children's attitudes.	+ (?)
H4	Women will be more influenced by their parents' attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities than men.	-
H5	The smaller the number of siblings, the more a child will be influenced by its parent's attitudes.	-
H6	Children that report a warm family environment are influenced more by their parents in their attitudes towards euthanasia, towards homosexuality and towards the presence of ethnic minorities.	+
H7	Mothers have a larger influence on their children's attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities than fathers.	+
H8	Children whose parents differ in their attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities are less influenced by their parents attitudes than children whose parents have similar opinions.	+

I formulated an hypothesis on the effects of parental socialisation when children grow older. I found that with respect to attitudes towards euthanasia and homosexuals in the Netherlands, parental influence wanes as children age. However, in order to fully capture the lasting or fading effects of socialisation, longitudinal analysis would be required. Even though socialisation still appears to be a driving force behind the continuity of attitudes in Dutch society, newer generations only resemble their parents to a certain extent. Aggregate attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands underwent some dramatic changes over the last few decades, as will be shown in the following chapters.

The influence of parents' attitudes on their adult children's attitudes is substantial. This large influence does not disappear when we control for structural similarities between parents and children. How influential the parents are depends partly on family characteristics, but even in those families where parental influence is relatively small, this influence is still sizeable. Parental attitudes are thus important explanatory variables for adults' attitudes. Survey researchers might be reluctant to include parental attitudes based on children's reports because of possible measurement errors. According to my findings, it is possible to adjust for measurement errors. However, the error variances that should be incorporated into a model with only one informant are rather large. The error variance of parental attitudes that can be incorporated into a model with only information provided by the primary respondent is calculated by multiplying the standardised error term of this variable in a model with information from parents, children and siblings by the variance of the variable (De Vries, 2006). For opposition towards ethnic minorities, the computed error variance for father's attitude at age 15 of the child, as reported by the child, is .122; for mother's attitude this is .185; with respect to opposition towards homosexuality the computed error variances are .455 and .486 for father and mother respectively; for opposition towards euthanasia they are .363 for father's attitude at age 15 of the child and .410 for mother's attitude. The question remains of whether children may have been better judges of their parents' attitudes when they were 15 years old than the parents themselves. The biases that occur when people look back on their own previous attitudes are the topic of Chapter 5 of this book.

Parents are considered to be relatively stable in their own attitudes in this chapter, but this is not necessarily the case. Parents can change their levels of intolerance during the years they are raising their children due to some external influences. Parents could also change their attitudes as a reaction to the attitudes of their children (cf. Poortman & Van Tilburg, 2005). Future research should address these possible changes to assess the true levels of transmission of intolerance between the generations of a family.

Chapter III
Changes in Dutch tolerance towards minority groups, 1970-2004[2]

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will describe and explain the changes in the supposedly famous 'Dutch tolerance' between 1970 and 2004. The Netherlands is certainly perceived as a tolerant nation. At Wisconsin University (2005) classes are taught in Dutch tolerance as part of topics in Dutch culture. The European edition of the *International Herald Tribune* attributes an article to 'Dutch tolerance' and how such a tolerant society deals with terrorism (Cohen, 2005). *ABC radio* (2005) discusses 'the legendary tradition of Dutch tolerance' in its breakfast program, whereas *The Weekly Standard* knows that 'The origins of Dutch tolerance lie in the mercantile pragmatism of Holland's Golden Age' (Kurtz, 2004). Even the *Hip Travel Guide* (2005) praises 'famous Dutch tolerance'. The word combination 'Dutch tolerance' certainly turns out to be popular. Taking the Google internet search engine as an indicator, no less than 34,200 hits were produced in February 2007. No other nationality combined with 'tolerance' turned up with so many hits. As shown in Table 3.1, the difference between 'Dutch tolerance' and neighbouring 'Belgian tolerance' (69 hits) may be particularly regarded as remarkable.

Table 3.1 Incidences of internet pages with exact wording of '[national] tolerance', Feb. 2007

	Google hits February 13, 2007
"Dutch tolerance"	34,200
"American tolerance"	17,600
"Jewish tolerance"	1,190
"British tolerance"	989
"French tolerance"	957
"Russian tolerance"	592
"German tolerance"	537
"Swedish tolerance"	355
"Spanish tolerance"	273
"Swiss tolerance"	243
"Danish tolerance"	174
"Irish tolerance"	159
"Italian tolerance"	72
"Belgian tolerance"	69

Source: Google search engine, February 13, 2007

[2]An earlier version of this work was presented at the 'Marktdagen' of the Dutch and Flemish Sociology Association, May 2005.

Many popular articles discuss the changes in Dutch tolerance in the new century. Interethnic clashes, which culminated in the murders of Islam critics Fortuyn in 2002 and Van Gogh in 2004, troubled the picture of a tolerant Dutch society. However, already in the 1990s research showed that the Dutch do not differ much from other European populations with respect to their attitudes towards foreigners (Quillian, 1995). Recently, European Union reports of the Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia provided a rather average position for the Netherlands compared with the other European Union members (Coenders, Lubbers & Scheepers, 2005). And though the Dutch have a particularly relaxed stance towards gays (Kelley, 2001), in Belgium, Denmark and Spain homosexuals are allowed to marry as well. In this contribution I set out to explain changes since the 1970s in Dutch attitudes towards ethnic minorities and homosexuals. I propose to test hypotheses that predict general changes in tolerance applying to attitudes towards both minority groups. I also test specific object-related explanations, as some macro-level changes are expected to have an impact on views on ethnic minorities, but not on homosexuals or vice versa. Studying congruencies and differences between the explanations of the trends in both attitudes will bring research into exclusionist attitudes a step forward.

Persell, Green and Gurevich (2001) studied – for the American context – attitudes towards both minorities to test theories on tolerance. Their static approach to racial and homosexual tolerance will be developed into a dynamic one. For the Netherlands, a trend approach was followed by Coenders and Scheepers (1998) and Van de Meerendonk and Scheepers (2004) for ethnic discrimination and civil rights for gays, respectively. Over a shorter time span, ethnic distance has been investigated by Scheepers (1996) as well. I will advance the research on ethnic distance and attitudes towards homosexuals by comparing explanations of changes in tolerance regarding both minority groups. Moreover, I add new macro attitude-related explanations, investigate to what extent some of the crucial explanations of tolerance are stable over time, and take into account a longer timeline. Hence my research questions read: *'How have attitudes towards homosexuals and ethnic distance developed in the Netherlands over the 1970-2004 period, and how can these changes be explained?' and 'How have the influences of religion and education on attitudes towards homosexuals and ethnic distance changed over these past 34 years?'*

3.2 Expectations

Socialisation is considered the most important factor in the formation of people's attitudes (Durkheim, [1902] 1934). The attitudes one internalises during childhood and puberty are considered stable over the lifespan, a phenomenon labelled as the persistence thesis (Glenn, 1980). From this perspective on attitudes, attention has to be paid to birth cohorts and their socialisation to explain changes in average attitudes over time (Mannheim, 1952; Alwin, Cohen & Newcomb, 1991). However, the process of the

changing composition of a society is a slow one and does not account for some of the more rapid changes in aggregate social attitudes. One would need large differences in attitudes between the extreme cohorts to account for significant change in the overall average (Heath & Martin, 1996). Others emphasise therefore the effects of periods (e.g. Kraaykamp, 2002).This chapter will discuss both period and cohort effects.

Because of the age-period-cohort identification problem, estimation of these effects is in itself not meaningful due to their mutual dependency. De Graaf (1988) argues that '... to know whether a generation [...] effect exists, gives less information than knowing if the characteristics specified [...] indeed affect the development of [...] values.' In this contribution a more theoretical approach will therefore be applied, by replacing periods and cohorts as historical times, with more theoretically relevant indicators. Period effects will, for example, be replaced by economic conditions and coalitions in government. Cohort effects could be interpreted in terms of changing composition (for example the changing level of education in the population) or by differences between cohorts in socialisation aspects such as religious environment. Scholars might argue that other macro indicators are also correlated with the trend in the dependent variables, so theories are needed to deduce hypotheses about them. I tried to use the most important theories to arrive at the prediction of the relation between trends in indicators and trends in attitudes towards homosexuality and ethnic minorities.

In previous research, demographic compositional changes were found important in explaining liberalising attitudes towards homosexuality in the United States (Loftus 2001). Trend questions and cohort effects have more strongly dominated research on racial attitude change (Smith, 1985; Steeh & Schumann, 1992; Schumann et al., 1997). The importance of demographic societal changes and cohort replacement is also stressed in sociological studies on the trends in numerous other attitudes (Neve, 1995; DiMaggio et al., 1996; Davis, 2001; Hellevik, 2002; Brooks & Bolzendahl, 2004).

This section first considers relevant individual characteristics briefly, as indicators for the compositional differences between subsequent birth cohorts, then focuses on cohort effects as a result of different socialisation experiences. At the same time, attention is paid to contextual periodical circumstances that influence attitudes. Finally, the changes in individual-level effects over time are discussed.

Compositional changes

There is abundant empirical evidence that individual characteristics influence the attitudes people have towards homosexuals (Herek, 1985; Kelley, 2001; Loftus, 2001; Van de Meerendonk & Scheepers, 2004) and the presence of ethnic minorities (Quilian, 1995; Kunovich, 2004, Coenders, Lubbers & Scheepers, 2006). As the composition of Dutch society has changed over the last 30 years for a variety of these individual characteristics, part of the change in attitudes towards these issues might be explained by this changing structure of the population.

In particular, religion and education were found to be important predictors of the attitudes towards both minority groups. Individual religiosity influences attitudes towards homosexuality negatively in many countries in the developed world (Kelley, 2001), since most religions condemn homosexual lifestyles. There is evidence that the negative correlation with religiosity also holds true for attitudes towards ethnic minorities in European countries (Scheepers, Gijsberts & Hello, 2001). Education is found to be an important predictor for both racial tolerance and homosexual tolerance, as was shown by Persell, Green and Gurevich (2001) and Loftus (2001). The negative effect of education on attitudes towards ethnic minorities has been interpreted with propositions of ethnic competition theory (Kunovich, 2004; Scheepers, Gijsberts & Coenders, 2002; Tolsma, Lubbers & Coenders, 2008) as well as by ideas from the cognitive learning approach (Bobo & Licari, 1989). In the latter approach, educational attainment is considered to represent conceptual complexity and sophistication of the reasoning process, necessary for developing the willingness and ability to extend civil liberties to non-conformist groups by a 'sober second thought'. The extension of civil liberties to other groups would also apply to homosexuals. Ethnic competition theory offers a paradigm to explain individual differences in attitudes towards the presence of ethnic minorities (Coenders & Scheepers, 1998). In short, ECT assumes that groups in society compete over scarce resources, such as employment, following classical conflict theory (Coser, 1956; Scheepers et al., 2002). One of the lines along which competition occurs is ethnicity. Majority members perceive ethnic minorities as a threat to their own opportunities for obtaining scarce resources. As individuals perceive this ethnic competition, they develop a more negative attitude towards so-called out-groups. Some individuals are likely to experience more ethnic composition due to their structural position in society. Lower-educated individuals are more likely to compete over jobs and housing with the generally lower-educated minorities than the higher educated in society. Changes in the composition of a society with respect to these characteristics may explain (some) of the macro-level changes (Smith, 1985; Davis, 2001). Since the huge increases in educational attainment and secularisation that have taken place in the Netherlands, my expectation is that *Structural differences between birth cohorts explain a large proportion of the trends in attitudes towards homosexuals* (H1) *and in ethnic distance* (H2).

Time matters

From the experience of First World War theory (Mannheim, 1952) it follows that the circumstances during one's formative years are of decisive influence on attitudes in later life. This socialisation assumption has been adopted by many social scientists (Inglehart, 1990; Alwin & Scott, 1996; Heath & Martin, 1996). The notion of persistency of values over the life course can be used to derive hypotheses on aggregate attitude change from a different angle. From this viewpoint, changes in public opinion are also due to cohort succession: the disappearance of earlier cohorts and the rise of later cohorts that were socialised in different eras. I therefore expect that next to differences

in socio-structural composition, birth cohorts will differ from each other in their attitudes because they were socialised in different times under different contextual circumstances. The context people live in can affect them during socialisation, after which the imprinted experiences continue to have an effect during the life course – *the cohort socialisation* effects. However, contexts can also influence the attitudes of all individuals at a specific point in time when a specific context exists. I will call these contexts *period effects.* Let us find out which circumstantial characteristics during formative years and during times of measurement are expected to influence attitudes towards homosexuals and ethnic minorities.

The Second World War

Inglehart (1990) was one of many scientists to notice that people born after the Second World War differed in values from those born earlier. The former were considerably more post-materialist than materialist. He pointed to the relatively affluent circumstances during the formative years of post-war born group as a cause for the rapid shift in values between generations. He argued that those socialised under better economic conditions were more inclined to place an emphasis on the need for belonging, esteem and self-realisation, and that those who had experienced 'total war' or poverty would emphasise the need for security and basic economic goods. I expect that those cohorts born after the Second World War will also be more tolerant towards homosexual lifestyles and show less ethnic distance, not only because tolerance is sometimes considered to be one of the post-materialist values, but also because of the moral compass the Second World War provided for the second half of the twentieth century in the Netherlands. Those born after 1945 were socialised in a time when the atrocities of Nazi Germany served as rock bottom of the human capacity for evil. Ethnic minorities and homosexuals were among those persecuted by the Nazis. People socialised after the Second World War will – more strongly than ever before – have been taught that one has to show tolerance towards these groups. I thus expect that *people born after the second World War will be more tolerant towards homosexuals (H3) and ethnic minorities (H4).*

Moral leadership

People follow cues from elites or perceived important people about what to think over certain topics (Converse, 1964; Zaller, 1992). As these influential people mostly represent an institution, the extent to which dominant social institutions bring their stances towards minorities to the fore is expected to affect the extent to which people comply with these stances. This theory on moral leadership or elite opinion leadership (McLaren 2001) predicts variation of influence according to the dominance of the institution, and predicts that institutions reach non-members as well. Hence I expect a macro-level effect of leadership above individual-level membership effects, and identify as major moral leaders the church and the government.

Some of the most powerful institutions in transferring values are the churches (Heath & Martin, 1996). Over the course of the twentieth century the Netherlands saw a decline in church membership, more strongly so from the 1960s onwards (Scheepers, Te Grotenhuis & Bosch, 1999). Fewer people are thus likely to depend on normative leadership from a church. Christian doctrine condemns homosexuality, and although some Dutch churches allow some freedom for homosexuals, most oppose equal rights for this group (Hekma, 2004). With advancing secularisation, the churches have gradually lost a large proportion of their influence on public debate and politics. The 'religious' opinion became less and less heard in the Dutch public opinion climate. It can thus be expected that as secularisation progressed, negative attitudes towards homosexuals diminished. Hence, I formulate the hypotheses that i*ndividuals in times of further secularisation have less negative attitudes towards homosexuals* (H5) and that *individuals socialised in times of low secularisation have more negative attitudes towards homosexuals* (H6). The stances of the churches towards ethnic minorities are not particularly outspoken and sometimes contradictory, therefore I do not formulate hypotheses on the socialisation and period effects of societal secularisation on ethnic distance.

Along the same line of reasoning it can be argued that individual attitudes are affected by another source of moral leadership, the government (Budge & Farlie, 1983; Thränhart, 1992; Franklin, Mackie & Valen, 1992; Lubbers, Gijsberts & Scheepers, 2002). Regarding homosexuality in the Netherlands, both left-wing parties (social democrats, greens and socialists) and right-wing parties (liberals and social liberals) have a policy proposal history to improve the position of homosexuals. Even the populist party of Fortuyn – with its spearhead on immigrants' integration – broke the tradition of homophobia of other European look-alikes (Ignazi, 2003), as murdered party leader Pim Fortuyn was openly gay himself, discussing his sexuality on prime-time television. Outspoken unfavourable positions are taken by two small conservative Christian parties (State Reformed Party and Christian Union). Although they oppose any form of violence against gays, they see homosexuality as unnatural and against God's word. The largest and most-often governing party, the Christian Democrats, has a somewhat double-hearted gay-policy. Never making it a spearhead topic, it voted for a variety of civil rights for gays. Nevertheless, it may be labelled as more conservative with regard to gay emancipation as compared to the government partners it had to deal with. Following Converse (1964) and Zaller (1990), I expect the policies and decisions the government makes to influence the attitudes of the public: *The more Christians in the government, the more the public is opposed to homosexuals* (H7). I expect that the government has a similar influence on the formation of attitudes during the socialisation period, so that *Individuals socialised in times with more Christians in the government have more negative attitudes towards homosexuals* (H8).

Of the government parties in the Netherlands, it has been in particular the liberal party (VVD) which has held the most restrictive stances towards immigration since the 1970s (although its position was shortly overtaken by the LPF in 2002), whereas

social democrats were the least restrictive (Lubbers et al., 2002). However, it was the spokesmen of the liberal party who recognised the problems of multicultural society as such and pleaded for integration as an answer (Prins, 2004). The expectation is thus that *The more Liberal representatives in the government, the more the public shows ethnic distance* (H9). I do not formulate a hypothesis on the effects of liberal governments during the formative years. For most of the individuals in my sample, immigration was not a topic of political debate during their socialisation periods.

Organisation of the gay community and AIDS

Next to the general explanations of changes in the attitudes towards both homosexuals and ethnic minorities, I expect specific circumstances to have had their effect. With regard to attitudes towards homosexuals, I turn to the organisation of the gay community and the effect of the spread of AIDS in the 1980s, as Loftus (2001) suggests taking into account.

Like in many other Western countries, the emancipation of homosexuals started out in the 1960s, when the organisation for homosexuals (COC) openly began promoting their integration into mainstream society. The yearly 'pink pride', which was intended to improve emancipation, did not start until 1977 though (IHLIA 2005). Although the emphasis alternated between integration and segregation, the COC has been a constant factor in homosexual life in the Netherlands. The more members the COC had over the years, the louder its voice and the larger its influence on public opinion about homosexuals could be.

In the 1980s AIDS hit the homosexual community in particular. I expect that the seriousness and seeming exclusiveness of this disease may have led to more negative attitudes towards homosexual lifestyles and towards homosexuals in general. Previous research indeed has found correlations between people's perceptions of AIDS and their perceptions of homosexuals (Kunkel & Temple, 1992; Price & Hsu, 1992). Recently, an American study found moderate influences from regional AIDS incidence on attitudes towards homosexuality (Ruel & Campbell, 2006). AIDS incidence had a negative impact on civil rights attitudes on homosexuality, as well as on morality attitudes. Therefore, I included the number of AIDS infections per year. Formulated in hypotheses I expect that *The more members the COC has, the less negative attitudes towards homosexuals are* (H10) and that *The higher the number of AIDS infections, the more negative attitudes towards homosexuals are* (H11). Again, I formulate no hypotheses on socialisation effects, since both AIDS and the COC were unknown to most of my respondents during their formative years.

Ethnic competition: rising migration and unemployment

To explain the trend in attitudes towards ethnic minorities specifically, ethnic competition theory (ECT) is one of the most often applied (Blalock, 1967; Quillian, 1995). Ethnic competition theory offers a paradigm to explain individual differences in attitudes towards

the presence of ethnic minorities, as well as generational and periodical variation. ECT assumes that groups in society compete over scarce resources, such as employment. The perceived ethnic conflict on scarce resources depends on contextual circumstances. When there are only few ethnic minority members in society, they will not be considered a large threat. Previous research indicates that it is not absolute numbers, but recent growth rates in minority populations which poses the larger threat (Gijsberts & Dagevos, 2004). Formulated in a hypothesis, *I expect that The higher the growth in the number of ethnic minorities living in the Netherlands, the stronger individuals show ethnic distance* (H12). Another commonly used indicator of competition is level of unemployment (Coenders & Scheepers, 1998). When the economy flourishes, individuals will perceive less threat from ethnic out-groups than in times of poor economic circumstances, as resources are not or less scarce in affluent times. Coenders and Scheepers could only support the former hypothesis for the 1975-1993 period though. Derived from ethnic competition theory, I expect that *In times of higher unemployment, individuals show stronger ethnic distance* (H13). Similarly, I expect people who experienced more threat or more scarcity during their socialisation period to have internalised less favourable attitudes towards ethnic minorities: Individuals socialised in times of high immigration levels show more ethnic distance than individuals socialised in times of low immigration levels (H14) and *Individuals socialised in times of high unemployment levels show more ethnic distance than individuals socialised in times of low unemployment levels* (H15).

Changes in individual level effects over time

When I concentrate on the two main predictors of attitudes towards homosexuality and ethnic minorities – education and religion – I await altered effects over time. As educational opportunities increased for all social classes, the lower educated more strongly became a homogeneous category of people with fewer skills and less opportunities (Gesthuizen, 2004). The lower educated today are therefore expected to differ stronger from the higher educated in their attitude towards homosexuality and ethnic distance than before, even if the lost exclusivity of a higher education lowered the tolerance of this latter category. This expectation is also in line with the gained importance of education in other fields (Kalmijn, 1991), even though DiMaggio et al. (1996) found convergence instead of divergence between most social categories over time on a variety of social attitudes[3]. Similarly, I expect that religious people in Dutch society today are a more selective group than they used to be, more 'convincedly religious' than before. With increasing secularisation, the effect of religion will increase, i.e. religious people differ stronger from nonreligious people in their attitude towards homosexuals and ethnic minorities. Previously, Miller & Hoffmann (1999) provided evidence for growing divisiveness among moral attitudes for the US. My expectation is that The effects of religiousness and education on attitudes towards homosexuals and the presence of ethnic minorities have increased in strength over time (H16).

[3] DiMaggio et al. (1996) regressed scores of differences between social categories on years of measurement. In this way, there is no control for other relevant characteristics. I suggest including interaction terms between time and education and religion.

3.3 Data

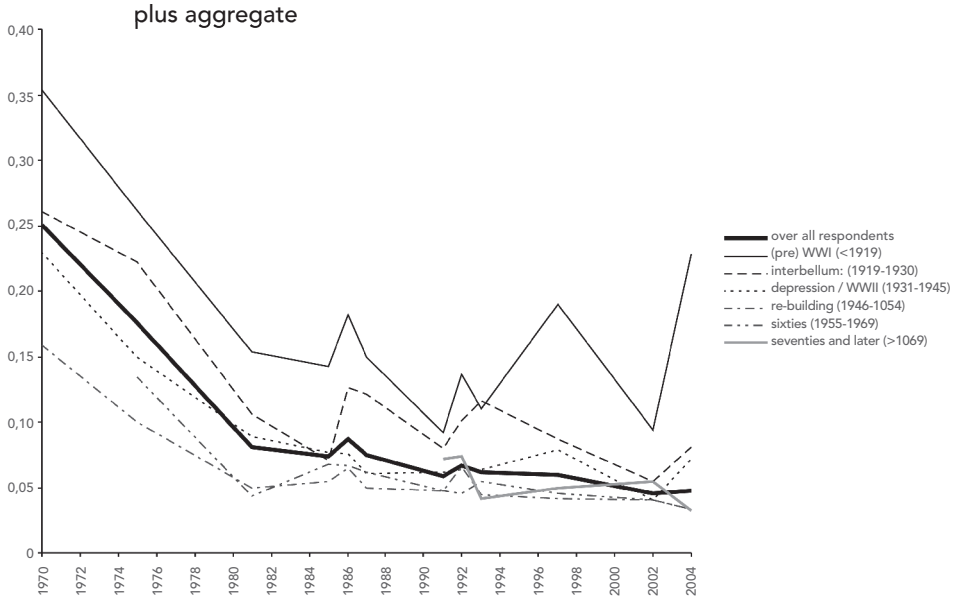
The dataset I use consists of several waves of the survey 'Cultural Changes in the Netherlands', from the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP, 1975-2002), shorter time spans of which have been used by Neve (1995) and Coenders and Scheepers (1998). Each of the waves is considered representative of the Dutch population in the period the survey was taken, the result of multi-stage cluster sampling, by provinces and community size. The upper-age limit, which was set to 74, has been abandoned since 1985. The SCP reported the lowest response rate of 64% in 1993, the highest being 84.9% in 1975. Each sample consists of approximately 2,000 respondents.

A measurement of attitudes towards homosexuals was included 9 times in the period 1975-1997, and of attitudes towards ethnic minorities 19 times in the 1975-2002 period. For the analyses on attitude towards homosexuality, the 1970 dataset on cultural and economic conservatism, as carried out by Middendorp (1970), was added. I added the 2002 and 2004 Dutch waves of the European Social Survey, in which the same item on homosexual lifestyles had been included. Response rates for these surveys are 67.3 and 64.3 respectively. The cross-sectional samples have been combined into two pooled datasets – for attitudes towards homosexuals and ethnic minorities – of respectively 21,701 and 33,853 respondents aged 18-93.

Attitude towards homosexuals was measured with the item: 'Should homosexuals be left free as much as possible to live their own lives?', and has the answer categories 'yes' and 'no' in data from 1970 up to 1997. However, in the ESS data of 2002 and 2004, answer categories ranged from 1 'agree strongly' to 5 'disagree strongly'. I collapsed the answers into two categories, with everyone who indicated to disagree or to disagree strongly as opposing homosexual lifestyles[4]. To obtain more confidence in my measurement, I analysed to what extent it correlates with other items on homosexuality that were included in some of the surveys only. In 1975 and 1992, two more extreme items that 'homosexuals should be firmly dealt with' and 'should be eliminated from society' were included as well. The three items correlate strongly, and refer to one dimension, as the results from factor analyses show. The correlation between the item used here and the constructed scale was 0.71 in 1975 and 0.70 in 1993. In 1985, 1987 and 1993, next to the item I use in my analyses, other items on homosexuality were included in the survey ('rejection of a gay couple living together' and whether gays should have equal rights on a number of domains). Again, factor analysis showed in each year that all items direct to one scale of the attitude towards homosexuals. The correlation between the item used here and the constructed scale was 0.66 both in 1985 and 1987, and 0.68 in 1993.

[4] The opposition towards homosexual lifestyles in earlier years may be somewhat inflated, with people who are neutral forced to choose between yes and no. However, this could work the other way around as well.

Figure 3.1a Trends in attitude towards homosexuality 1970-2004 per birth cohort plus aggregate



Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1997; European Social Survey 2002-2004

Figure 3.1a depicts the trend in the attitude towards homosexuals for various birth cohorts. The bold line indicates the aggregated trend. The attitude towards homosexuals became rapidly less negative in the 1970s, and remains more or less constant ever since, turning to an almost universal agreement on letting homosexuals free to live their own lives. Whereas 25% of the Dutch still thought that homosexuals should not be left free in 1970, and almost 20% thought so in 1975, the percentage has dropped below 10% since 1980. This low percentage is comparable to other measurements on attitudes towards homosexuals, as long as one does not refer to the adoption of children by same-sex couples (Van de Meerendonk & Scheepers, 2004). The trends for the different birth cohorts are largely parallel, which indicates that period-specific variation exists.

Attitude towards the presence of ethnic minorities was measured by asking 'How would you feel if members of another race came live next door to you?'. It taps the reaction of personal confrontation with ethnic minorities and has been part of the well-known ethnic distance scale as developed by Bogardus (1933), more recently applied by Bobo and Zubrinsky (1996) too. Response categories were 'wouldn't mind', 'depends', 'would mind' and 'would actively resist'. I coded these answering categories to a dichotomy as well – as the distribution was far from normal – making logistic regression for changes in both attitudes possible, comparable to Scheepers' (1998) approach. I distinguished people without any objection from all the other categories, of which the

latter is coded one. Other items on ethnic minorities were included in the questionnaire on a less regular base. I studied to what extent the used measurement forms a factor with other questions on ethnic minorities, when available, to determine the generalisability of my measurement. The ethnic distance item forms one factor with other issues in the surveys of 1997 and 1993 ('The presence of immigrants is annoying', 'There are too many immigrants', and questions whether immigrants should be granted permits to stay under certain conditions), and correlates with the scale built out of these items by 0.59 in 1997 and 0.62 in 1993. This provides us with evidence that also in the 1990s the measurement taps a reaction towards ethnic minorities, comparable to more recently included measurements. Another measurement – ethnic discrimination (Coenders & Scheepers, 1998) – was introduced in 1979, somewhat later than the measurement on ethnic distance. The correlation between the discrimination scale and ethnic distance stayed rather constant over time, around 0.40. Figure 3.1b depicts the trend in having any kind of objection to a neighbour of another race. Quite different from the objection to freedom of homosexual lifestyles, around half of the Dutch population shows ethnic distance to some extent.

Figure 3.1b Ttrends in ethnic distance 1975-2002 per birth cohort plus aggregate

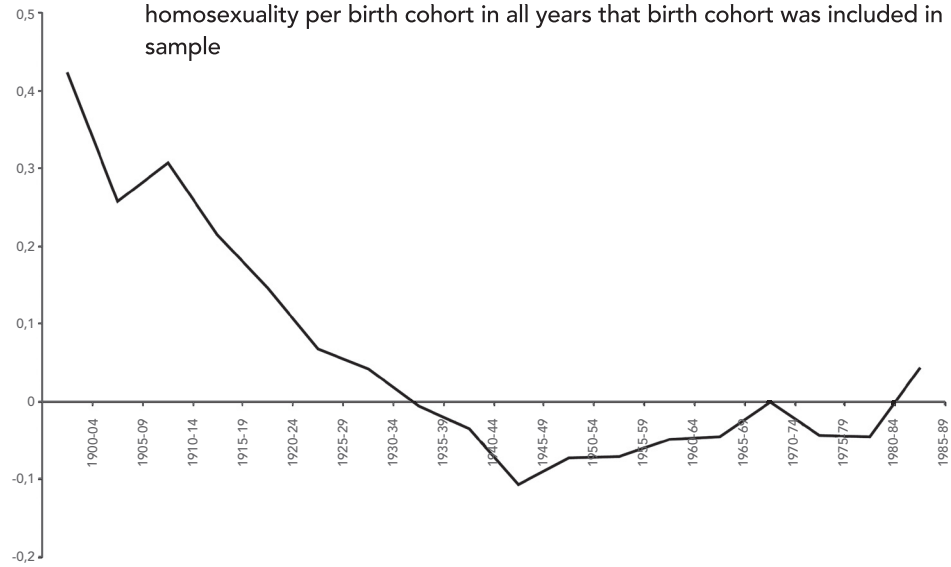
Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1975-2002

[5] Previously, Scheepers (1996) coded the 'depends' category as 'no objection'. However, the trend pattern of the dichotomy as proposed in the current research follows the trend pattern of the average of the original coding better. Moreover, I performed multinomial analyses to compare the results with the binary outcomes. Period and cohort estimates for the 'depends' category do not differ from the results presented in this chapter.

Comparing Figures 3.1a and 3.1b, one sees divergent trends in the two attitudes towards minority groups. The trend in ethnic distance appears to fluctuate, with negative highs in the early 1980s, 1992 and 1993, and in particular in the early 21st century. It is remarkable that these are precisely the periods when extreme right-wing parties polled well in national elections, namely the Centre Party in 1981 and 1982 and the Centre Democrats in 1992 and 1993. The List Pim Fortuyn – with its focus on the immigration and integration themes – had an unprecedented gain in 2002. At the low end of my measurement are 1975 and 1978 as well as the mid 1990s. Again, I differentiate the trends over birth cohorts and find similar trends for all of them, which points to the existence of period effects in ethnic distance.

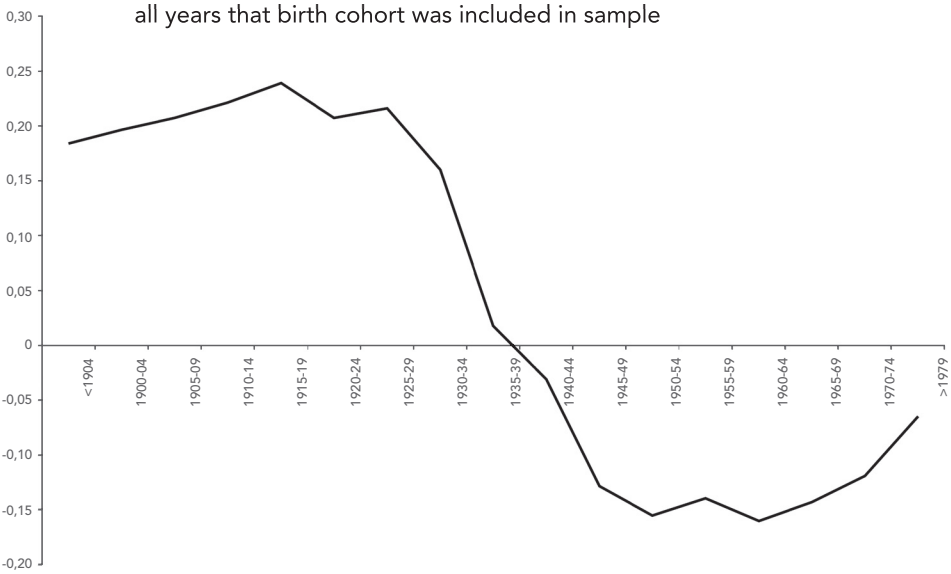
Also estimated is the average deviance per birth cohort from the mean, expressed in z-scores. These figures represent the differences between cohorts when periodical fluctuations are controlled for, and summarise the lines in Figures 3.1a and 3.1b. In other words, it shows how much each cohort deviates from the mean over all years combined. I calculated the aggregate attitude for the years of measurement each birth cohort was represented by at least 30 respondents, and the proportion of the standard deviation that this particular cohort deviated from the aggregate mean, repeating this procedure for all five-year birth cohorts. Figures 3.2a and 3.2b show the results for the attitude towards homosexual lifestyles and ethnic distance respectively. Opposition to homosexual lifestyles has diminished over birth cohorts, reflecting the differences on the y-axis for the various cohorts as depicted in Figure 3.1a. Those born more recently are on average less opposed to homosexual lifestyles than people born in the early twentieth century. Most tolerant are those born shortly after the second World War, as expected. However, this specific ingredient of socialisation appears to wear off. One can see an upward moving line for the latest cohorts. Appendix 3A presents a model that estimates cohort differences, finding that people born after 1955 do not differ significantly from those born between 1945 and 1954.

Figure 3.2a Average deviance from mean proportion with negative attitude toward homosexuality per birth cohort in all years that birth cohort was included in sample



Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1997; European Social Survey 2002-2004

Figure3.2b Average deviance from mean proportion experiencing ethnic distance over all years that birth cohort was included in sample



Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-2002

Figure 3.2b shows the mean deviance of the intercept per cohort for the proportion experiencing ethnic distance. People born before the Second World War show considerably more ethnic distance than those born in 1945 or later. People born between 1980 and 1984 show some more ethnic distance than the cohort that precedes them, although they are still below average in ethnic distance. However, in the model presented in the Appendix 3A, where I estimate the differences for the ten year-birth cohorts, I find a continuing decrease in ethnic distance over cohorts. The slightly lesser tolerance towards both groups shown by the youngest in my sample might indicate that a reverse trend is taking place. The future will tell us whether this is indeed the case. For resistance towards homosexual lifestyles, cohort succession seems to account for at least part of the trend. For ethnic distance the results are less clear, although part of the decrease during the 1990s might be due to the larger proportion of people born after the Second World War in the consecutive samples.

Individual-level characteristics

Education was measured as the highest completed educational level of the respondents in seven categories. *Having a child, marital status* and *daily activity* are included as controls for age effects. *Daily activity* consists of eight categories for the working and six categories for other activities, such as retirement, housekeeping or schooling. For objection to homosexuals only six dummy variables for all other activities are included and compared to working respondents, since I do not expect any differences between the working categories. Respondents were asked to name their denomination, if any, whether they were raised religiously, and how often they attend church nowadays. The models include whether respondents are *religious*, whether they had had a *religious upbringing,* and how often they *attend church per year*. *Sex* and *urbanisation degree* are included as control variables. The 1978 wave did not include frequency of church attendance, so respondents in this year were given the average score on church attendance per denomination of the 1979 wave. Degree of urbanisation was not measured in 1970. For this year, respondents were given the average score on urbanisation in 1975. Urbanisation, church attendance and educational attainment were measured differently in the European Social Surveys. These have been recoded to reflect the Cultural Changes measurements as closely as possible.

Cohorts

Six birth cohorts are distinguished. The first birth cohort was born previous to or during the First World War. The second cohort is identified as interbellum period, born between 1919 and 1930. The third cohort was raised during the hardships of the Depression and the Second World War, born between 1930 and 1944. The fourth cohort was born during the Reconstruction period after the Second World War, from 1945 to 1954. The fifth birth cohort was socialised in the 1960s and 1970s, and born between 1955 and 1969. The last cohort classified was born in 1970 or later.

Period and cohort socialisation characteristics

For the analyses related to homosexuality I used the annual *number of AIDS infections* (CBS Statline, 2005a) and the *membership counts of the Dutch Gay and Lesbian Organization COC* (COC 1970; COC 1975-2004), divided by 1,000. For attitude towards ethnic minorities I used *growth in the percentage of inhabitants of non-Western origin* per year, and *level of unemployment* per year. non-Western country. Non-Western countries are defined as African, Latin American and Asian countries, including Turkey but excluding Indonesia and Japan (CBS Statline, 2005). The number of non-western immigrants in thousands is defined by people coming from Surinam, the Dutch Antilles, Indonesia, Turkey and Morocco, as well as the number of asylum requests (ibid.). As these Figures go back to 1910, they are used to construct the cohort indicator of immigration. I averaged the figures from the four years the respondent was between 15 and 18 years of age. Unemployment level was measured as the registered unemployed as percentage of the labour force. As a cohort indicator I added figures before 1970 on the registered labour reserve as a percentage of the total labour volume (ibid.).
In the analyses of attitudes towards homosexuals the *proportion of Christian Democrats in the governmen*t was included, whereas for the analyses on ethnic distance I used the *proportion of Liberal representatives in the government* (Parlement & Politiek, 2005).

For circumstances during formative years (cohort socialisation characteristics) I calculated the average scores on various indicators for the time the respondent was 15 through 18 years old. For the analyses regarding homosexuals I calculated the *average proportion of Christian Democrats in government.* For homosexual tolerance I included the average percentage of non-religious in Dutch society between the respondent's ages 15 to 18. For the analyses on ethnic distance only I calculated the *average number of non-Western immigrants* (CBS Statline, 2005) and the *average unemployment rate* (Brugmans, 1969; CBS, 1975; CBS Statline, 2005) over the years the respondent was 15 to 18 years of age. Descriptive measures for the identified period and cohort socialisation indicators are presented in Appendix 3B.

3.4 Results

To answer my research question on the predictors of attitude change, I estimate three models for both attitudes separately. I use multilevel binomial regression analysis as an estimation method, with respondents nested in years of measurement. The first model presented for both attitudes is the so-called empty model, which provides the variance between the years. The second model includes structural characteristics that might explain the trend in aggregate attitudes towards homosexual lifestyles and ethnic distance respectively. The third model includes cohort characteristics, both socialisation experiences and birth cohorts directly. The fourth and final model includes relevant period characteristics. Results from the multilevel logistic regression analysis can be found in Tables II and III for the attitudes towards homosexual lifestyles and ethnic distance respectively. Next, I show the residuals for the year levels of the consecutive models to evaluate how well I can explain the observed trends with my predictors. Finally, I present random slopes models for my main individual predictors of educational attainment and religiosity in Table 3.4 as

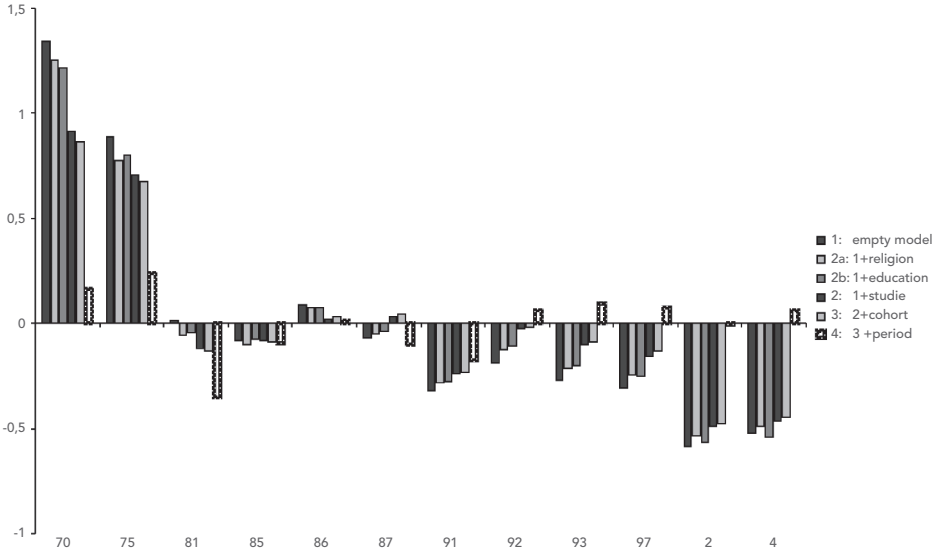
well as the residuals for educational attainment and religiosity.

Results on opposition towards homosexual lifestyles

The first model of Table 3.2 presents the empty model. I find significant between-year variance in the attitude towards homosexuals. Model 2 includes structural characteristics of the respondents. The between-year variance is reduced significantly, indicating that a large part of the differences in attitudes towards homosexual lifestyles can be explained via cohort composition effects. The model shows all expected structural effects. Men are significantly more opposed towards homosexual lifestyles than women. Those with a higher education are more tolerant towards homosexuals, whereas individual religiosity increases the probability of objection to homosexual lifestyles. Divorcees and people with children show more objection to homosexual lifestyles, which I did not hypothesise. Birth cohorts and cohort socialisation indicators are included in the third model to search for remaining cohort replacement explanations for the decreasing objection to homosexual lifestyles. Religious socialisation in the public domain during the formative years cannot explain the observed trend. However, I do find that the cohort born shortly after the Second World War is the most tolerant towards homosexuals, which supports my hypothesis partly. I expected that the decrease in opposition would continue. Controlled for the structural composition of the birth cohort, I find that those born in 1955 or later are less tolerant, and people born between 1931 and 1945 do not differ from the first post-war birth cohort. Bivariate, the differences between the later birth cohorts and those born between 1945-1954 are not significant, as can be seen in Appendix 3A. I calculated many additional models with slightly different combinations of explanatory variables to account for the observed increase in differences between cohorts. Given the low level of religiosity and the high level of education, the later born cohorts are expected to differ more from the 1931-1954 cohorts by the model than they do in the data.

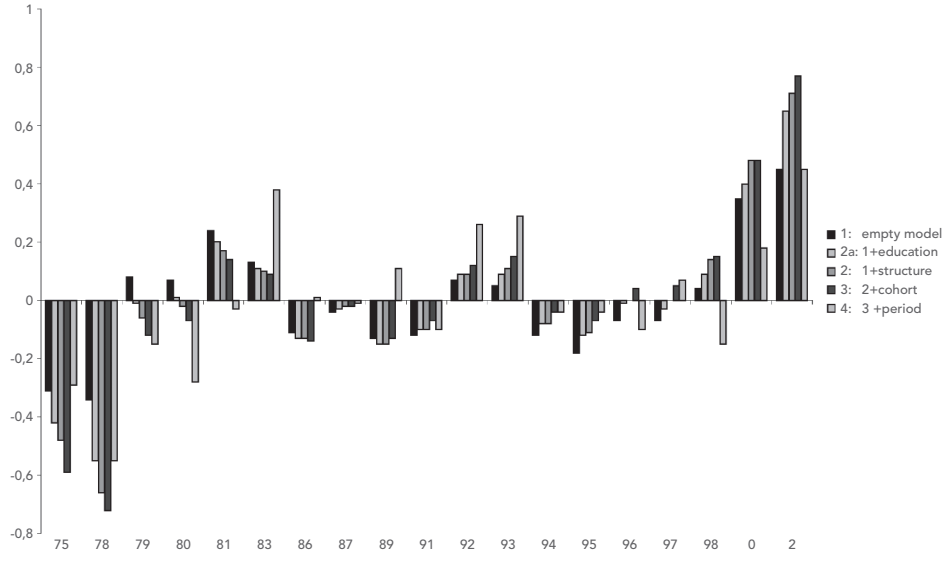
The fourth and final model includes period indicators. The between-year variance component now reaches only the threshold of significance. I was able to explain almost all between-year variation. The number of AIDS infections has a small positive effect on opposition to homosexuals, and the percentage of non-religious improves attitudes towards homosexuals. The moral leadership hypothesis is not supported. Christian Democrats in government do not have any significant effect, nor does the size of the gay lobby group COC influence attitudes towards homosexuality. Figure 3.3a shows the year-level residuals for some of the models. The first bar indicates the variance for the empty model. Then I include education (see bar 2a), which reduces the residuals slightly. Next, I show the residuals for a model with only individual religiosity (bar 2b). For all years of measurement, the third bar is smaller than the second, which means that religion is a more powerful predictor than educational attainment for tolerance towards homosexual lifestyles. Bar 2 represents the between-year variance of model 2, wherein all structural components were included. Again, I find that the residuals diminish. The next step is to include cohorts and cohort socialisation indicators, as in my model 3 from Table 3.2. One can see only very small differences with the previous bar. The largest drop is found when I include the period indicators in the last bar.

Figure 3.3a Year-level residuals of the negative attitude towards homosexuals



Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1997; European Social Survey 2002-2004

Figure 3.3b Year-level residuals of ethnic distance



Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1975-2002

The year-level variance approaches now zero in most years, which visualises what I found in model 4 from Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Logistic regression modeling the negative attitude towards homosexuals (N =21,701)

	model 1		model 2		model 3		model 4	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
intercept	-2.25		-2.62		-3.33		-.97	
Individual characteristics:								
men			.70**	.07	.69**	.08	.69**	
marital status:								
single - *reference*								
married			.18~	.09	.17	.09	.21*	
divorced			.40**	.11	.30*	.11	.31**	
widowed			.06	.09	-.03	.09	-.03	
having children			.04	.06	.19*	.06	.18*	
educational attainment			-.22**	.02	-.21**	.02	-.21**	
daily activity:								
employed - *reference*								
unemployed			.33	.18	.34~	.17	.34~	
housekeeping			.33**	.08	.30**	.09	.29**	
disability benefits			.08	.15	.16	.15	.17	
student			.23	.15	.07	.16	.05	
pensioner			.25**	.09	.13	.11	.16	
other			.25	.20	.22	.20	.23	
urbanization			-.03	.02	-.03	.02	-.03	
religious indicators:								
church membership			.33**	.09	.36**	.09	.36**	
church attendance			.03**	.00	.03**	.00	.03**	
religious upbringing			-.01	.09	.01	.09	.01	
Cohorts								
(pre)WWI (<1919)					.69**	.10	.66**	
interbellum: (1919-1930)					.28*	.10	.26*	
depression / WWII (1931-1945)					.09	.09	.09	
re-building (1946 – 1954) - *reference*								
sixties (1955-1969)					.40**	.10	.40**	
seventies and later (>1969)					.66**	.16	.71**	
Cohort indicator at age 15-18:								
average % non-religious					ns			
average proportion Christians in government					ns			
Period indicators:								
% non-religious							-.07**	
proportion Christians in government							ns	
aids infections							.001*	
members COC							ns	
Year-intercept variance	.30**	.13	.17*	.07	.15*	.07	.03	.02
Respondent-intercept variance	1		1		1		1	

*~p < 0.10 *p < 0.05 **p < 0.01; ns non-significant*
Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1997; European Social Survey, 2002-2004

Results on ethnic distance

Table 3.3 shows the results from multi-level binomial regression modelling with regard to ethnic distance. Model 1 is again an empty model to calculate between-year variance. Model 2 includes individual characteristics, which increases the variance component. Based on the changing structural characteristics of the respondents, I would expect a decreasing trend in ethnic distance. However, the effects found tend to be quite common in empirical studies. Men show more ethnic distance, as do farmers. Noteworthy are the effects of the marital status of the respondents. Married or widowed persons show more ethnic distance than those who are single; those who are divorced show less ethnic distance. Level of education shows the expected negative effect on ethnic distance. However, since the level of educational attainment has only increased in Dutch society, the negative effect I find can in no way account for the sharp increase in ethnic distance at the onset of the new century. Most of the main predictors in this second model would indicate less ethnic distance at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The Dutch are on average higher educated, more often single, and less religious than ever before. The increase in the reported ethnic distance is thus truly remarkable, especially since the largest part of this increase took place even before the September 11 attacks which led to the worldwide-expressed experience of feeling threatened by Moslems. Model 3 includes cohorts and cohort socialisation indicators. The two cohorts that were born after the Second World War show significantly less ethnic distance than those born before the war. However, the latest birth cohort shows a non-significant increase in ethnic distance, compared to those born between 1945 and 1954. This finding again points to the possibility that the latest birth cohorts are becoming less tolerant than those born just after the Second World War. The percentage of unemployed during the formative years has no effect. However, the more immigrants during socialisation the more ethnic distance respondents experience.

The final model presented in Table 3.3 includes period indicators. Ethnic competition theory is only partly supported by my findings. The percentage of unemployed does not increase ethnic distance, however the increase in the percentage of inhabitants of non-Western origin does affect the level of ethnic distance. The proportion of Liberals in the government has a borderline significant effect. The more Liberals ruling the country, the more ethnic distance people show. The between-year variance has now decreased compared to models 2 and 3. The period indicators can explain part of the trend, which had been inflated by the correction for structural composition. However, compared to model 1, a higher variance component at the year-level is still seen. Figure 3.3b depicts the year-level residuals for the consecutive models for ethnic distance. The first bar shows the observed variance. Once educational attainment in my model are included, residuals in 1975, 1978, 1998, 2000 and 2002 increase, whereas they hardly change in the in-between years. Including all structural characteristics of the respondents (see bar 2), residuals increase even further for the above-mentioned years, and again when cohorts and socialisation indicators are included (see bar 3). Only when I include periodical circumstances do the residuals for the beginning and the end of my time of measurement decrease. However, the residuals for the measurements between 1980 and 1993 increase. Apparently, the period indicators identified can only explain the two extremes of the trend in ethnic distance, not the

relatively stable period in the 1980s and 1990s.

Table 3.3 Logistic regression modeling ethnic distance (N = 33,853)

	model 1		model 2		model 3		model 4	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
Intercept	-.05		.14		-.06		-.74	
Individual characteristics:								
men			.11**	.03	.08**	.03	.08**	.03
marital status:								
single - reference								
married			.29**	.03	.24**	.04	.24**	.04
divorced			-.10~	.05	-.14**	.06	-.14**	.06
widowed			.35**	.05	.18**	.06	.18**	.06
having children			-.06*	.03	.03	.03	.03	.03
educational attainment			-.12**	.01	-.11**	.01	-.11**	.01
daily activity:								
unskilled laborer - *reference*								
skilled laborer			.09	.08	.10	.08	.10	.08
low employee			.05	.08	.05	.08	.05	.08
middle employee			-.03	.08	-.03	.08	-.03	.08
high employee			-.12	.08	-.15~	.08	-.15~	.08
farmer			.41**	.18	.36*	.18	.36*	.18
small self-employed			.13	.10	.08	.10	.08	.10
unemployed			-.25**	.10	-.26**	.10	-.26**	.10
housekeeping			.16*	.08	.08	.08	.08	.08
disability benefits			-.04	.09	-.15	.09	-.15	.09
student			-.11	.09	-.19**	.09	-.19*	.09
pensioner			.37**	.08	.12	.08	.12	.08
other			.05	.10	-.01	.10	-.01	.10
urbanization			-.02**	.01	-.03**	.01	-.03**	.01
religious indicators:								
church membership			.25**	.03	.24**	.03	.24**	.09
church attendance			.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.09
religious upbringing			-.11**	.03	-.10**	.03	-.10**	.00
Cohorts								
(Pre)WWI (<1919)					.47**	.06	.47**	.06
interbellum: (1919-1930)					.50**	.05	.50**	.05
depression / WWII (1931-1945)					.27**	.04	.28**	.04
re-building (1946 – 1954) reference								
sixties (1955-1969)					-.13**	.04	-.12**	.04
seventies and later (>1969)					.04	.08	.04	.08
Cohort indicators at age 15-18:								
number of immigrants					.004**	.002	.004**	.002
% unemployed					ns		ns	
Period indicators:								
Δ % inh. of non-Western origin							.18**	.06
proportion liberals in government							.46~	.26
% unemployed							ns	
Year-intercept variance	.041**	.014	.085**	.028	.100**	.033	.060**	.020
Respondent-intercept variance	1		1		1		1	

*Notes ~p < 0.10 *p < 0.05 **p < 0.01*
Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1975-2002

Effects of religion and education over time

Table 3.4 presents the effects of being religious and educational attainment for both attitudes over time, i.e. the slopes for being non-religious and educational attainment are set to be random over years. These models are controlled for all cohort and individual characteristics, but for reasons of convenience these effects are not shown. The developments of these predictors over time vary for the different attitudes. The random slope for being religious on attitude towards homosexuals over time is significant. The slope for educational attainment on attitude towards homosexuals does not change significantly over time though. Figure 3.4a shows the deviance from the effects of being religious and educational attainment on homosexual tolerance per year. Some of these residuals are significant. In general, the trend is that in later years the deviation from both effects is positive. As being religious has a positive main effect, the effect becomes larger in recent years. The negative deviation of the main effect of religiousness is so large in the 1970s, that the direction of the effect itself becomes negative. This is due to the fact that the model is controlled for church attendance. In the 1970s, the difference in opposition towards homosexuals is between those who attend church often and those who hardly attend church, regardless of whether the latter are religious or non-religious. In more recent years, being religious is enough to differ from the non-religious, irrespective of how often one attends church. When church attendance instead of religiousness is interacted with year of survey, this is corroborated. Being religious has become a more important predictor for opposition towards homosexuality, as hypothesised.

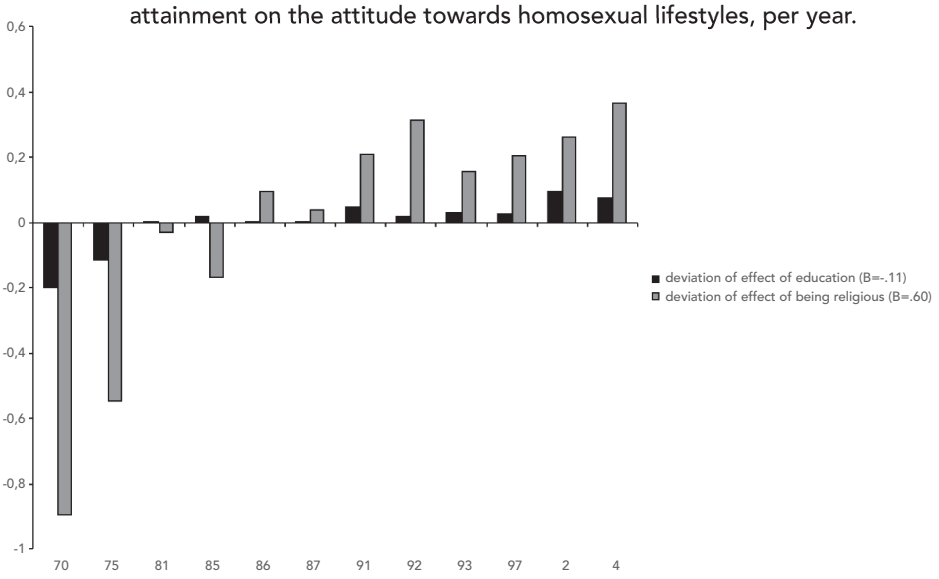
Table 3.4 Random slope effects for being non-religious and educational attainment over years for the attitude towards homosexuals and ethnic distance

	opposition to homosexuals		ethnic distance	
	B	s.e.	b	s.e.
Year random intercept variance	.37**	.16	.05**	.02
Religious random slope variance	.33**	.10	.02**	.01
Year intercept by non-religious slope covariance	.12*	.07	.01	.01
Year random intercept variance	.39**	.18	.08**	.03
Educational attainment random slope variance	-.22**	.03	$-.17^{-2}$**	$.08^{-2}$
Year intercept by educational attainment slope covariance	.01	.00	-.01~	.00

*Notes ~p < 0.10 *p < 0.05 **p < 0.01*
Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-2002; European Social Survey 2002-2004

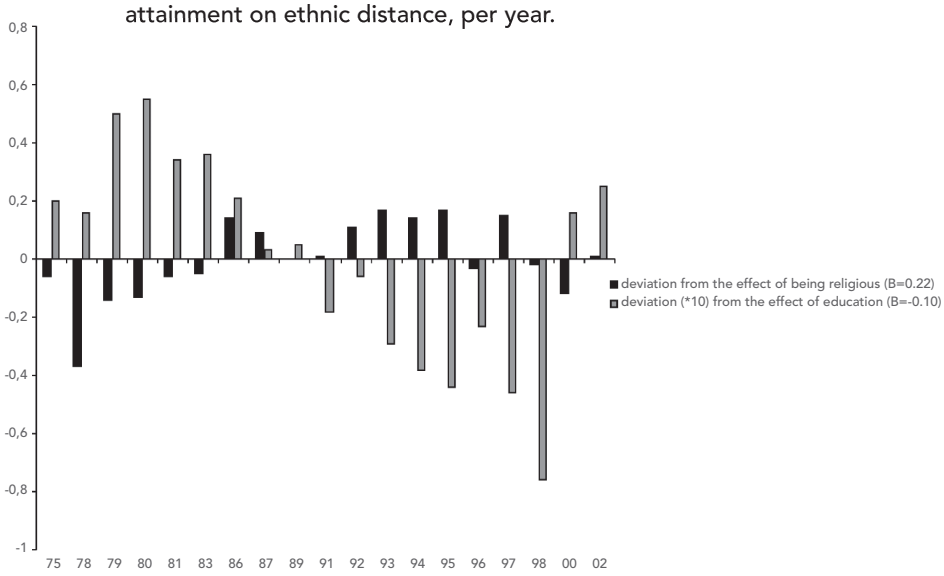
For ethnic distance I do find significant random slopes for the effects of education and being religious, as is shown in Table 3.4. Figure 3.4b depicts the deviance from the main effects of the two predictors per year. Being religious initially had a positive effect on ethnic distance, which does not increase significantly over time. Educational attainment had a negative effect on ethnic distance, and shows a trend towards a larger negative effect in more recent years, with the exception of the years 2000 and 2002. The predictions were that the effects of being religious and educational attainment on both items would become stronger over time, due to the altered composition of the groups of religious and lower educated individuals in the Netherlands. The predictions are only partly supported. The influence of religiousness increases for opposition towards homosexuality, but not ethnic distance. The effect of educational attainment becomes stronger for ethnic distance, but not for opposition to homosexuals.

Figure 3.4a Deviation from the main effect of being religious and educational attainment on the attitude towards homosexual lifestyles, per year.



Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1997; European Social Survey 2002-2004

Figure 3.4b Deviation from the main effect of effect of being religious and educational attainment on ethnic distance, per year.



Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1975-2002

3.5 Summary and discussion

For the attitudes towards homosexuals and ethnic minorities, different trends have taken place in Dutch society. Whereas with regard to attitudes towards homosexuals the label of 'Dutch tolerance' is underlined by the trend towards less negative attitudes, for ethnic distance the label seems to be inapplicable and even more misplaced in recent times. Ethnic distance turns out to coincide with periods of popular support for extreme right-wing and populist parties and is so far largest in the new millennium, when so many people started to discuss the tradition of 'Dutch tolerance'.

To explain the trends in attitudes towards both minority groups I made use of cohort and period explanations, and controlled for the structural characteristics of the population. I found many of the expected effects of the individual characteristics. I hypothesised that the structural changes in Dutch society would explain a large proportion of the observed trends. Nevertheless, I could only explain the trend in attitude towards homosexual lifestyles, as the trend in ethnic distance was contrary to expectations. I expected cohort socialisation effects to be of importance as well. The cohorts socialised after or during the Second World War were more tolerant towards both minority groups, although there are some indications that this particular socialisation aspect is wavering. Moral leadership during the formative years was of no influence on attitude towards homosexuality, above own religiosity and controlled for religious upbringing. Ethnic competition theory found some support, as the number of immigrants during socialisation had a small positive effect on ethnic distance.

Next, I hypothesised on period indicators that might explain the observed trends. Again, results were mixed. The percentage of non-religious in society and the number of AIDS infections affected tolerance towards homosexual lifestyles, but neither the Christian Democrats in government nor the membership counts of the gay and lesbian pressure group COC were of influence. For ethnic distance, I again found partial support for ECT. The periodical variation in unemployment was unimportant, but the increases in percentage of non-Western inhabitants did have the expected effect. I also find some support for my moral leadership hypotheses here. The only significant effect regarding the morality-providing institutions I identified is that of the current proportion of Liberals in government on ethnic distance.

For both attitudes, I found that lower educated people and religious people are less tolerant. These two strongest predictors for the respective attitudes increased in strength over time. Education dropped in importance for attitude towards homosexuals though. This leads to the conclusion that tolerant Dutch society seems to be unstable over time, and depending on the scope of the issue it is only tolerant to a certain degree. Moreover, not all variation between periods turned out to be explained, which provides us with opportunities for new searches of the origins of aggregate attitude change. I would especially like to encourage more research into periodical contextual circumstances to explain the observed trend in ethnic distance, such as media attention or interethnic contacts

Chapter IV
Changes in 'Dutch Morality' 1970-2004[6]

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe the changes in opinion towards such controversial issues as euthanasia and homosexuality in the Netherlands. Many perceive the Netherlands as extremely liberal in this respect, and critical comments are often heard: 'Men cannot live with the horrors of Holland', according to the American columnist and philosopher John Mark Reynolds (2004). He is referring to Dutch regulations regarding euthanasia, and he is no exception. Many more local newspapers, radio stations and websites in the United States share his view on Dutch morality concerning life-and-death issues. But euthanasia is not the only issue on which the Dutch have extraordinary legislation. The Netherlands were the first country in the world to grant, in 2001, same-sex couples the right to marry. Political leaders in all modern countries have to deal with ethical issues. One way to cope is to ignore certain practices, another is to fight them. Currently, the typical Dutch way is, perhaps, to find pragmatic solutions that are rather liberal from a foreign perspective (Buruma, 2007). This liberal way of dealing with ethical issues now applies to many issues in the Netherlands, such as prostitution and soft drugs, as well as to euthanasia and homosexual rights. Euthanasia and same-sex marriage have both been legalised recently. The liberalisation of legislation on these two issues has often been subject to criticism from the Vatican, as well as from Western conservative think-tanks. I will investigate the changes in Dutch public opinion toward these two controversial issues. Although the recent legal changes concerning euthanasia and homosexual life are visible nationally and internationally, less is known about the changes in Dutch public opinion towards euthanasia and homosexuals in recent decades. Van de Meerendonk & Scheepers (2004) showed increasing support for gay rights. The changes in attitudes towards euthanasia are seldom addressed. This contribution aims to describe and explain the changes in aggregate attitudes towards euthanasia and homosexuality in the Netherlands since the early 1970s. I will identify social developments that played a role in shaping Dutch attitudes on the two issues. My first research question reads: *How have attitudes towards euthanasia and homosexuality developed in the Netherlands over the 1970-1998 period, and how can these changes be explained?*

The second question I pose is to what extent influences of individual-level characteristics have changed over time. In previous research (e.g. Gill, 1998; Kelley, 2001; Van de Meerendonk & Scheepers, 2004), many individual attributes have been shown to relate to the attitudes under study. I will focus in particular on the predictors that have shown to be strongest in previous research: education and religion. Since the composition of both the religious and the lower educated group in Dutch society is expected to have changed over time, for instance with regard to age and sex, the influences of religiousness and educational attainment are expected to have changed over time as well. I will investigate how the influences of religion and education on attitudes towards

[6]A different version of this chapter was published in the *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* (Jaspers, Lubbers & De Graaf, 2007). An earlier version was presented at the University of Trento Sociology seminar in June, 2005.

euthanasia and homosexuality have changed over the last 30 years. Legislation on both euthanasia and a homosexual lifestyle has become more tolerant and accommodating, and aggregated attitudes on these two topics show similar patterns over time.

4.2 Expectations

Cohorts and composition

A macro trend towards more cultural progressiveness in the Western world is often explained in terms of cohort replacement. For Inglehart (1977, 1990), socialisation in different eras – by which he means the difference between post- and pre-World War II periods – offers an explanation for the macro trend towards more post-materialist values. According to him, the age differences often found in value orientations reflect the differences in socialisation in different circumstances and with different influences. Subsequent birth cohorts were socialised in different eras and are therefore expected to have different attitudes. In this tradition, change in the aggregate attitudes of the population is explained by the rise of new generations and the disappearance of the older ones. One could regard this as a change due to contextual circumstances, although Inglehart's theory also contains a compositional component.

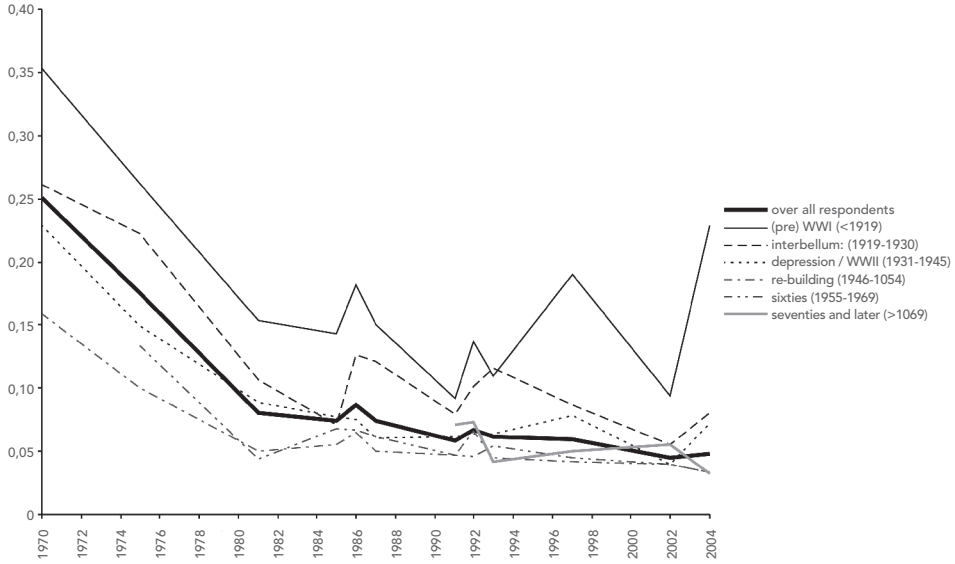
Alwin (1990) stresses the importance of distinguishing between two types of generational replacement: one where subsequent birth cohorts have experienced a different socialisation in a different context, and another one due to changing numbers of individuals with certain individual attributes in society. As cohorts differ in the degree to which certain individual characteristics are represented, the changing relative number of individuals with a certain characteristic in society leads to macro-level changes. One of the clearest examples is educational level, as later birth cohorts are, on average, much more highly educated than earlier birth cohorts. And educational level, as I shall argue in the next section, is one of the more important predictors for liberal socio-cultural attitudes. As relatively more highly-educated individuals make up a society due to cohort replacement, the socio-cultural attitude associated with a higher education will be more prevalent on a macro level.

Figure 4.1a Trends in opposition to euthanasia 1970-1998 per birth cohort plus aggregate

Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1998

Cohort replacement cannot explain all changes in socio-cultural attitudes though. The process of the changing composition of a society is a slow one and does not account for some of the more rapid changes in average socio-cultural attitudes. One would need very large differences in attitudes between the extreme cohorts to account for any significant change in the overall average (Heath & Martin, 1996). Heath and Martin (1996) presented evidence against the idea that older people are more resistant to attitude change. They found that older generations, born before the Second World War, show at least as big a shift towards a more liberal view on abortion as did some of the younger generations. Alwin and Scott (1996) found that the growth of pro-feminist attitudes during the 1970s and early 1980s was primarily operating through intra-cohort factors, rather than inter-cohort replacement, which is why others have emphasised the effects of periodical circumstances (e.g. Kraaykamp, 2002). Periodical circumstances affect all individuals alive and of age at a specific time, so different cohorts should undergo the same changes. Previous research provides strong evidence for the existence of both period and cohort explanations of changes in attitudes towards homosexuals (Van de Meerendonk & Scheepers, 2004).

Figure 4.1b Trends in opposition to homosexuality 1970-2004 per birth cohort plus aggregate



Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1997; European Social Survey 2002-2004

Figures 4.1a and 4.1b show the aggregate trends in opposition to euthanasia and homosexual lifestyles respectively. The figures indicate both period and cohort circumstances to influence general attitude. The trend lines move in the same direction for all respondents, thus showing that their opinions are influenced by specific circumstances in the context of the year the survey took place. At the same time, one can see that differences between cohorts in the level to which they object to euthanasia and homosexuality seem fairly constant, which could point to the existence of cohort influences (either compositional or in socialisation). Appendix 4A shows the average deviance per cohort from the aggregated means in all survey years.

The change in socio-cultural attitudes is related to the general age-period-cohort identification problem. Identification of period and cohort effects is in itself not meaningful because of their mutual dependency. De Graaf (1999) argues that '(...) to know whether a generation [...] effect exists, gives less information than knowing if the characteristics specified [...] indeed affect the development of [...] values.' In this paper a more theoretical approach will therefore be applied by replacing periods and cohorts as historical times with more theoretically relevant indicators. Period effects will be replaced by societal conditions and coalitions in government. Cohort effects will be interpreted in terms of changing composition (for example the changing level of education in the population) or by differences between cohorts in socialisation with or without Christian-led governments.

Historic circumstances

A central assumption in theories on public opinion is that elites have influence on individuals' attitudes (Converse, 1964; Zaller, 1990). The idea that elites – such as government leaders and the like – determine what and how the public thinks, is highly accepted in public opinion research. In particular when people do not have strong attitudes, they are likely to apply the attitudes held by dominant institutions they are either members of or identify with (Zaller, 1992). Individuals or institutions with moral authority not only tell people what is right and what is wrong, but offer an organised belief system of non-conflicting attitudes (Zaller, 1990). For some, the church may provide this moral leadership, while others might turn to the dominant political ideology for their opinions. The stances of these institutions will be mirrored in the differences between members or identifiers versus non-members and non-identifiers. However, the theoretical approach on this subject holds that the influence goes beyond individual membership. When an intermediate group is more dominant, it is expected to affect non-members as well as members, especially when the subject is not directly salient to everybody.

Over the course of the twentieth century, the Netherlands has seen a decline in church membership that has intensified since the 1960s (Scheepers, Te Grotenhuis & Bosch, 1999; Wolters & De Graaf, 2005). Fewer people are thus likely to depend on normative leadership from the churches. Christian doctrine condemns both euthanasia and homosexuality. Although some Dutch churches allow some freedom for homosexuals, most oppose equal rights for this group (Hekma, 2004). With advancing secularisation, the churches have gradually lost a large proportion of their influence on public debate and politics. Although churches still lobby, there is less attention from the media for their points of view. Hence as secularisation progresses, negative attitudes towards euthanasia and homosexuals diminish.

Time matters: changing composition

There is abundant empirical evidence that individual characteristics influence the attitudes people have on a wide range of topics, including euthanasia (Gilman, Merrill & Reid, 1997; Leinbach, 1992) and homosexuals (Kelley, 2001; Van de Meerendonk & Scheepers, 2004). As the composition of Dutch society has changed over the last 30 years with regard to some of these individual characteristics, part of the change in attitudes towards these issues might be explained in terms of this changing structure of the population.

Religion and education were found to be particularly important predictors of both attitudes under study. Individual religiosity influences attitudes towards homosexuality (Kelley, 2001) and euthanasia (Gilman et al., 1995; Leinbach, 1992) negatively. Religious individuals are more exposed to the opinions of the church, and attach more value to these opinions, than non-religious individuals. Since all denominations in the Netherlands are opposed to euthanasia and homosexual behaviour at least to a certain

degree, all Dutch citizens who belong to a religious denomination are more likely to have negative attitudes toward these issues. Education was found to be an important predictor for 'homosexual tolerance' as has been shown by Persell, Green and Gurevich (2001). Educational attainment is considered to represent conceptual complexity and sophistication of the reasoning process, necessary for developing the willingness and ability to extend civil liberties to non-conformist groups by a 'sober second thought' (Bobo & Licari, 1989). This sober second thought should then lead to more tolerance for those who differ from the norm, and the higher educated are thus expected to have less negative attitudes towards homosexuals. A possible explanation for the empirical finding that the higher educated are less opposed to euthanasia is the increased sense of control they have over life and their decreased level of fear.

Having outlined two of the more important predictors of the attitudes studid, it is clear that changes in the composition of a society with respect to these characteristics may explain some of the macro-level changes: *The changes over time in attitudes toward euthanasia and homosexuals can be explained by the changing composition of society with respect to educational attainment and individual religiosity (H1).*

Time matters: specific circumstances for specific attitudes

It can be argued that individual attitudes are influenced not only by moral leadership from the churches but by another source of moral leadership as well, namely the government. People are influenced by visible others, such as ministers who appear on television. Although it is sometimes reasoned that the people determine the political agenda (e.g. Lipset, 1981), Heath et al. (1990) present evidence that new ideas are often spread top-down. It is the politicians who, to a considerable extent, affect attitude change in the general population. The Christian parties take an outspoken position in the Dutch political climate concerning euthanasia and homosexuals (Weyers, 2002). Christian Democrats are obviously more opposed to euthanasia and homosexuality, whereas Liberals and Social Democrats emphasise individual freedom in sexual and life-and-death decisions, resulting in a positive attitude towards both euthanasia and homosexuals. The policies and decisions the government makes may influence the attitudes of the public: *The more Christian Democrats in government, the more the public is opposed to euthanasia and homosexuals* (Hypothesis 2).

From First World War experience theory (Mannheim, 1952) it follows that the circumstances during one's formative years are of overriding importance on attitudes later in life. This socialisation assumption has been adopted by many social scientists (Inglehart, 1990; Alwin & Scott, 1996; Heath & Martin, 1996). The notion of persistency of attitudes over the life course can be used to derive hypotheses on socio-cultural attitude change from a different angle. From this viewpoint, changes in public opinion are due to cohort succession: the disappearance of earlier cohorts and the rise of later cohorts, socialised in different eras. I expect that the government, as a source of moral leadership identified, has an influence on the formation of attitudes during the

socialisation period: *Individuals socialised in times with more Christian Democrats in government have more negative attitudes towards euthanasia and homosexuals* (H3).

Changes in attitudes towards euthanasia and homosexuals are expected to be the results not only of the influence of changing governments, but of specific changes related to questions on euthanasia and homosexuals too. It is obvious that medical developments can increase or decrease the demand for euthanasia, as life expectancy rises with progressing medical knowledge. This may entail a decreased quality of life when living longer even with serious illnesses. If people are confronted with an increasing possibility of a long and slow process of dying, the demand for euthanasia might increase, as most people prefer a quick and painless death. I consider nursing homes to be the typical institutions dealing with long and slow deathbeds. In spite of the discussion on the quality of these homes in the Netherlands, people may fear a long period of low quality of life as well as helplessness. I acknowledge the fact that governments may try to influence the number of nursing home beds for reasons of budget cuts, resulting in fewer beds without the accompanying decrease in people living with serious illnesses. However, I still expect that the more nursing home beds are available in Dutch society (relatively speaking), the more people visit family and friends in these institutions and are confronted with patients in helpless and dependent situations. For some, this prospect may be so gruesome that they consider euthanasia for themselves a viable alternative to 'vegetating': *In times with relatively more nursing home beds, attitudes towards euthanasia are less negative than in times with relatively fewer nursing home beds* (H4).

I also hypothesise that specific periodical circumstances might influence attitudes towards homosexuals. The emancipation of homosexuals started in the 1960s, when the organisation for homosexuals (COC) began to openly promote their integration into mainstream society. Although the emphasis switched between integration and segregation, COC has been a constant factor in homosexual life in the Netherlands. COC was a very successful organisation compared to similar bodies in other European countries, and was even involved in the foundation of some of them (Warmerdam & Koenders, 1987).The more members the COC had over the years, the larger their influence could be on public opinion towards homosexuals. Some might argue the other way round, that a tolerant climate would increase the number of COC memberships. I agree that a more tolerant climate would increase the proportion of openly gay individuals and homosexuals coming out of the closet. However, fears of disclosure as a homosexual by becoming a member of the COC were probably not very likely, as membership was anonymous, with the exception of board members. If anything, I would expect the membership counts of this interest group to decrease as opposition in society wanes. And although tolerance toward homosexuals is widely spread in Dutch society, COC is not experiencing any increase in memberships – rather the opposite. I thus expect the volume of individuals represented by the COC to enlarge the influence the COC had on public opinion: *The more members the COC*

has, the less negative attitudes towards homosexuals (H5).

In the 1980s, AIDS affected the homosexual community in particular. The seriousness and seeming exclusiveness of this disease may have led to more negative attitudes towards homosexual lifestyles. A large body of research investigated the link between fear of AIDS and homophobia. Although the emphasis lay more on the effects of homophobia on fear of AIDS or support against discrimination of AIDS patients, evidence for correlation was strong and consistent in all studies (Kunkel & Temple, 1992; Price & Hsu, 1992; Magruder, Whitbeck & Ishii-Kuntz, 1993). In an American study, regional AIDS incidence did affect homophobia attitudes (Ruel & Campbell, 2006). It is very convincing that the causality between fear of AIDS and homophobia should work both ways: *The higher the number of AIDS infections, the more negative attitudes towards homosexuals* (H6).

Time matters: changes of individual level effects over time

Concentrating on the two main predictors of attitudes towards euthanasia and homosexuality – education and religion (Coleman, 1980; Kelley 2001) – I expect altered effects over time. As educational chances increased for all classes, the lower educated became a more homogeneous category of people with fewer skills and opportunities (Gesthuizen, 2004). People from lower backgrounds did not use to go through secondary and tertiary school, as they had to start working no matter how talented they were. At present, almost all children have some sort of secondary education, given that they are of school age until they reach 16. The difference in capacities between the lower and higher educated has increased. The lower educated today are therefore expected to differ more strongly from the more highly educated in their attitude towards euthanasia and homosexuality than before, even if the lost exclusivity of a higher education lowered the tolerance of people in this latter category. Similarly, I expect religious people today to be a more selective group than they used to, so that religious people nowadays are 'more religious' than before. Those with more religious doubts or who felt less at home in the church were the first to leave the church when it became more widely accepted in Dutch society. In other words, now that 50 percent of Dutch citizens do not consider themselves members of a religious community, the effect of religion will increase – that is, religious people today differ more strongly from nonreligious people in their attitude towards euthanasia and homosexuals than before: *The effects of individual religiosity and education on attitudes towards euthanasia and homosexuals have increased over time* (H7).

4.3 Data

The dataset I use to test my hypotheses consisted of several waves of the survey 'Cultural Changes in the Netherlands' conducted by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP). Each of these waves is considered to be representative of the

Dutch population in the period the survey was held and consists of 2,000 respondents on average. The item on euthanasia was included 15 times in the 'Cultural Changes' questionnaire in the 1975-1998 period and the item on homosexuals was included nine times in the 1975-1997 period. A similar 1970 dataset on cultural and economic conservatism, which comprises nearly all variables I am interested in, was added as well.[7] For the analyses on homosexuality I also added two waves of the European Social Survey, held in 2002 and 2004. The cross-sectional samples have been combined into two pooled datasets: 29,136 respondents for euthanasia and 21,701 for homosexuals, aged 18-93.

The attitude towards euthanasia was measured with a question in which the wording followed the way most people speak about euthanasia, as 'a shot given by a doctor'. The question was: Suppose a doctor can end someone's suffering at this person's own request by giving a shot. What do you think the doctor should do?' Answer categories were 'give a shot, 'it depends' and 'not give a shot'. For the analyses a dummy variable was used to compare explicit objection to euthanasia to the two other categories. The attitude towards homosexuals was measured with the item: 'Do you think that homosexuals should be allowed as much as possible to live their own lives, or should they be discouraged?', with answer categories 'allowed' and 'discouraged'. In the European Social Surveys the answering scale was extended to five categories, ranging from strongly agree that homosexuals should be left free to live their own lives to strongly disagree. I collapsed the measurement into the binary response of the Cultural Changes in the Netherlands surveys. Respondents who had indicated either to disagree or to disagree strongly with the statement that homosexuals should be left free were recoded as opposing homosexual lifestyles. Correlations with other measurements on homosexuality that were less often included in the surveys are strong. In the pooled datasets, individuals opposed to euthanasia and homosexual lifestyles form a minority. Only 12.5 percent of all respondents over the years explicitly opposed euthanasia, and a mere 9.6 percent felt that homosexual lifestyles should be discouraged.

Individual-level data

Education was measured as the highest completed educational level of the respondents in seven categories. *Having a child, marital status* and *daily activity* were included as controls for age effects. *Daily activity* was divided into one category for the employed and six categories for other activities, such as housekeeping or schooling. Respondents were asked to name the denomination they belonged to, if any, whether they were raised religiously, and how often they attended church. The models included whether respondents were *religious*, whether they had had a *religious upbringing*, and how often they *attended church per year* (ranging from 0 to 52 times). *Sex* and degree of *urbanisation* are included as control variables.

[7] For attitude towards euthanasia the following years are included in the analyses: 1970; 1975; 1979; 1980; 1981; 1983; 1985; 1986; 1987; 1991; 1992; 1993; 1995; 1996; 1997; 1998. For attitude towards homosexuals: 1970; 1975; 1981; 1985; 1986; 1987; 1991; 1992; 1993; 1997.

The wave from 1978 did not include frequency of church attendance, so respondents in that year were given the average score on church attendance per denomination of the wave for 1979. Degree of urbanisation was not measured in 1970, so respondents were given the average score on urbanisation for 1975. The categorisation of the European Social Survey variables differed slightly. Respondents were divided into six *birth cohorts*. One cohort that was born previous to or during the First World War; a second born between the Great War and the Depression; a third born in the Depression years or during the Second World War; a fourth cohort of baby boomers born during the reconstruction period; a fifth born in the 1960s; and a sixth born from 1970 onwards. Bivariate cohort differences can be found in Appendix 4B.

National-level data

Contemporary circumstances (period characteristics) were operationalised for all analyses combined, as well as for the two issues separately. For the analyses on attitude towards euthanasia I included time series on the *number of nursing home beds per 1,000 inhabitants* (Centrale Raad voor de Volksgezondheid, 1972; CBS 1980; CBS 1983; CBS 1986; CBS Statline 2005). For the analyses on homosexuality I used the *number of AIDS infections per year* (CBS Statline, 2005) and the *membership counts of the Dutch Gay and Lesbian Organization COC* (COC, 2005), divided by 1,000. For both analyses I included the *percentage of Christian Democrats in government*, dividing the number of CDA – or its predecessors CHU, ARP and KVP – ministers by the total number of cabinet posts (*Parlement & Politiek*, n.d.).

For circumstances during formative years – cohort characteristics – I calculated the average scores for the time the respondent was aged 15 through 18, using the same calculation method for the *average percentage of Christian Democrats in government*. I also included the average percentage of the non-religious in society between respondents' ages 15 to 18. Descriptive statistics for all national level indicators can be found in Appendix 4C.

4.4 Results

Binomial multi-level models with respondents nested in survey years were estimated. Results are presented first for opposition to euthanasia, second for opposition to homosexual lifestyles. I start with the so-called empty models, consecutively adding individual characteristics to control for compositional changes, then second birth cohorts and cohort characteristics, and finally periodical circumstances. Graphs illustrate the explained variance.

The attitude towards euthanasia

The first model in Table 4.1 presents the empty model to estimate the variance in opposition to euthanasia between years. This variance is significant, which means that differences in opposition between the years of survey indeed exist.

Table 4.1 Logistic regression modelling opposition towards euthanasia (N =29,136)

	model 1		model 2		model 3		model 4	
	B	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
intercept	-1.97		-3.27		-3.49		-4.91	
Individual characteristics:								
men			.34**	.05	.33**	.05	.33**	.05
marital status:								
single - *reference*								
married			-.07	.06	-.02	.07	.01	.06
divorced			.23*	.11	.31**	.11	.33**	.10
widowed			.02	.09	-.04	.10	-.01	.10
having children			-.03	.05	.05	.05	.04	.04
educational attainment			-.12**	.01	-.11**	.01	-.11**	.01
daily activity:								
employed - *reference*								
unemployed			.31**	.12	.31**	.12	.32**	.12
housekeeping			.28**	.06	.26**	.06	.26**	.06
disability benefits			.20*	.10	.21*	.10	.23*	.10
student			.09	.11	-.08	.12	-.09	.11
pensioner			.21**	.07	.08	.08	.10	.08
other			.03	.14	-.00	.15	.00	.15
urbanization			.03**	.01	.03**	.01	.03**	.01
religious indicators:								
church membership			.56**	.06	.57**	.06	.57**	.06
church attendance			.04**	.00	.04**	.00	.04**	.00
religious upbringing			.34**	.07	.35**	.07	.35**	.07
Cohorts								
(pre)WWI (<1919)					.47**	.08	.44**	.08
interbellum: (1919-1930)					.18**	.07	.16*	.07
depression / WWII (1931-1945)					.06	.06	.06	.06
re-building (1946 – 1954) - *reference*								
sixties (1955-1969)					.14*	.07	.15*	.07
seventies and later (>1969)					.58**	.13	.61**	.13
Cohort indicator at age 15-18:								
average % non-religious					ns		ns	
average proportion Christians in government					ns		ns	
Period indicators:								
% non-religious							-.10**	.03
proportion Christians in government							ns	
nursing home beds							ns	
slow deaths							.02*	.01
Year-intercept variance	.11**	.04	.04**	.02	.03**	.01	.012*	.006
Respondent-intercept variance	1		1		1		1	

*Notes ~p < 0.10 *p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ns non-significant*
Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1998

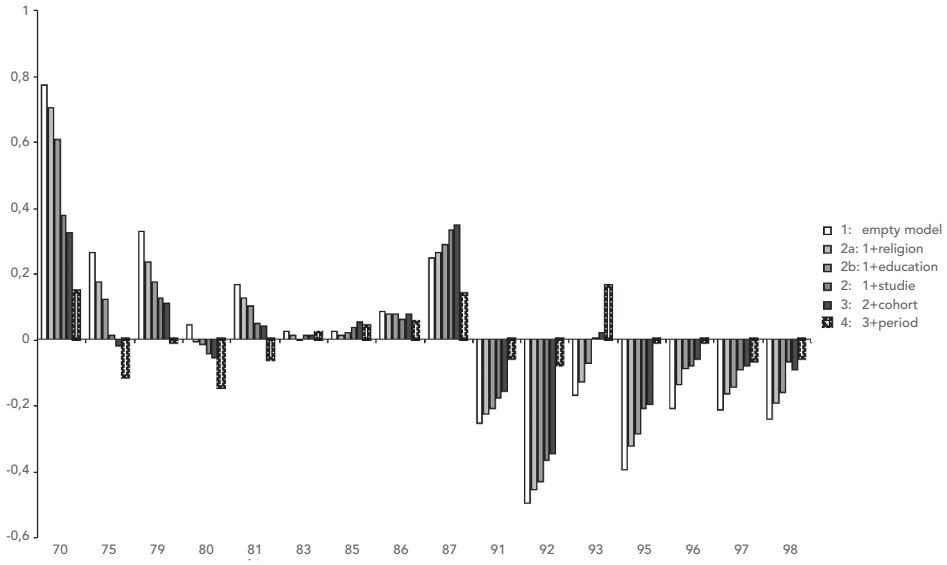
The second model includes structural characteristics of respondents to see whether part of the variance between years can be explained with a changing composition of society. Men are more opposed to euthanasia, and these numbers have not changed in Dutch society. The between-year variance is reduced by introducing the characteristics of the respondents, most notably by the decrease in number of religious people who attend church often. Surprisingly, there is no effect of losing a spouse on opposition to euthanasia, which is incongruent with previous findings. Respondents who are divorced, unemployed, doing housework or retired are more opposed to euthanasia. Respondents with a higher educational degree show less opposition.

Model 3 includes cohorts and cohort indicators. Significant differences are found between the birth cohorts. Respondents born between 1931 and 1945 are significantly less opposed to euthanasia than respondents born earlier or later, controlled for their levels of religiousness and education. However, the circumstances that I thought would explain this finding are of no importance. Neither the percentage of non-religious individuals during the formative years nor the proportion of Christian politicians in government during socialisation had a significant effect on attitude towards euthanasia. The variance between years is again reduced by the introduction of cohorts as predictors in my model.

The fourth and final model includes periodical circumstances as predictors. The percentage of non-religious in society at the time of survey shows a negative sign. Controlled for composition and birth cohort, the percentage of non-religious in society decreases the level of opposition to euthanasia. A small yet significant effect is found from the number of slow deaths as a percentage of the total death toll. The more people die of slow illnesses, the more opposition to euthanasia in society.

Figure 4.2a depicts graphically the reduction in year-level residuals for various explanatory models. The first bar represents the residuals for the empty model, consecutively showing the proportion of residuals that is explained by including religiousness as predictor, education as predictor, all structural characteristics, structural and cohort characteristics, and the full model. The largest drop in year-level residuals is observed when all the structural characteristics are added to the model. The introduction of cohorts into the model does lower the residuals for some years. The lowest level of residuals is obtained for the final bar, the full model in Table 4.1.

Figure 4.2a Year-level residuals of the opposition to euthanasia



Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1998

The attitude towards homosexuals

Table 4.2 presents my results for the attitude toward homosexuals. Model 1 shows the variance between the years in objection to homosexual lifestyles, model 2 includes individual-level characteristics. The variance between the years shows a dramatic drop when these variables are included, indicating that the trend towards less objection to homosexual lifestyles can largely be explained by cohort replacement. It is especially the decrease in religiousness and the increase in educational attainment of the younger generations which accounts for change in aggregate attitude. Some other significant effects are found. Men are more opposed to homosexual lifestyles than women, which is in line with previous empirical results. So are those that do housework and pensioners. However, these groups are less likely to differ so much in numbers between the years that they could explain the observed trend. The third model includes cohorts and cohort indicators to test socialisation explanations. Birth cohorts differ significantly from each other in their objection to euthanasia. People born between 1931 and 1954 are less opposed to homosexual behaviour than people born either previous to them or after them, controlled for cohort composition. However, none of the cohort socialisation explanations that I formulated contributes to this difference in homosexual intolerance between birth cohorts. Given the high level of education, and the low level of religiousness, the later born cohorts are expected to be even less intolerant than they are. The final model includes periodical circumstances at the year level as predictors. I find no

Table 4.2 Logistic regression modelling the negative attitude towards homosexuals (N =21,701)

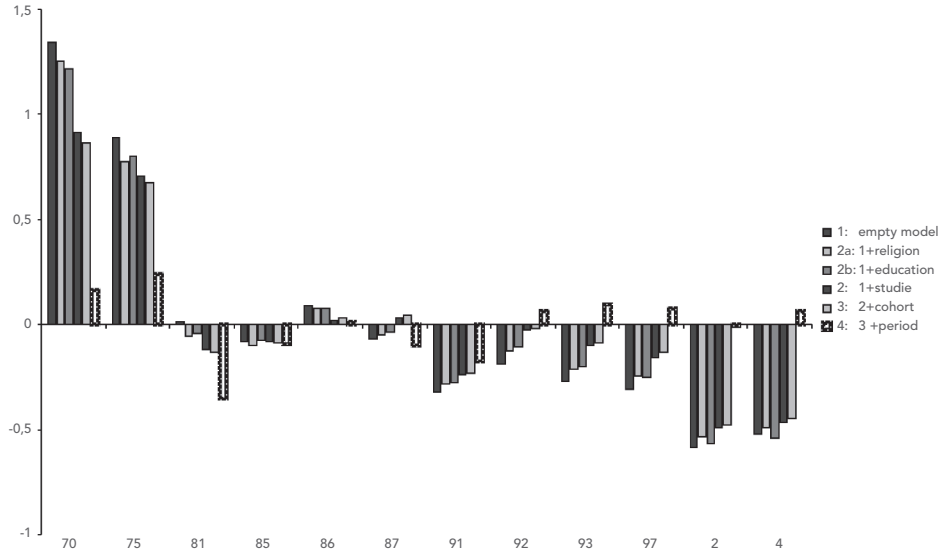
	model 1		model 2		model 3		model 4	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
intercept	-2.25		-2.62		-3.33		-.97	
Individual characteristics:								
men			.70**	.07	.69**	.08	.69**	.08
marital status:								
single - *reference*								
married			.18~	.09	.17	.09	.21*	.09
divorced			.40**	.11	.30*	.11	.31**	.11
widowed			.06	.09	-.03	.09	-.03	.09
having children			.04	.06	.19*	.06	.18*	.06
educational attainment			-.22**	.02	-.21**	.02	-.21**	.02
daily activity:								
employed - reference								
unemployed			.33	.18	.34~	.17	.34~	.17
housekeeping			.33**	.08	.30**	.09	.29**	.09
disability benefits			.08	.15	.16	.15	.17	.15
student			.23	.15	.07	.16	.05	.16
pensioner			.25**	.09	.13	.11	.16	.11
other			.25	.20	.22	.20	.23	.20
urbanization			-.03	.02	-.03	.02	-.03	.02
religious indicators:								
church membership			.33**	.09	.36**	.09	.36**	.11
church attendance			.03**	.00	.03**	.00	.03**	.10
religious upbringing			-.01	.09	.01	.09	.01	.09
Cohorts								
(pre)WWI (<1919)					.69**	.10	.66**	.11
interbellum: (1919-1930)					.28*	.10	.26*	.10
depression / WWII (1931-1945)					.09	.09	.09	.09
re-building (1946 – 1954) - *reference*								
sixties (1955-1969)					.40**	.10	.40**	.10
seventies and later (>1969)					.66**	.16	.71**	.16
Cohort indicator at age 15-18:								
average % non-religious					ns			
average proportion Christians in government					ns			
Period indicators:								
% non-religious							-.07**	.01
proportion Christians in government							ns	
aids infections							.001*	.000
members COC							ns	
Year-intercept variance	.30**	.13	.17*	.07	.15*	.07	.03	.02
Respondent-intercept variance	1		1		1		1	

*Notes ~p < 0.10 *p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ns non-significant*
Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1997; ESS 2002-2004

effects from proportion of Christians in government or number of COC members. My hypothesis regarding the moral leadership of the government is refuted, and so is my idea about the influence the COC might have on attitudes towards homosexuals. Level of religiosity at the time of measurement does affect opposition to homosexuals. The smaller the percentage of religious individuals in society, controlled for own religiosity, the lower negative attitudes towards homosexuals. My hypotheses with respect to number of AIDS infections cannot be refuted. The more AIDS infections in society, the more negative attitudes towards homosexuality are.

Figure 4.2b depicts the year-level residuals of the negative attitude towards homosexuals in the same order as in Figure4. 2a for euthanasia. A large drop is observed when structural characteristics are included at the respondent level, because of cohort replacement. However, when other cohort characteristics are included, year-level residuals only decrease marginally. Once the period indicators at the year level are introduced, year-level residuals show the largest decline to almost non-existence.

Figure 4.2b Year-level residuals of negative attitude toward homosexuals



Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1997; European Social Survey 2002-2004

Effects of education and religion over time

Table 4.3 presents the changes in effects of being religious and educational attainment for both attitudes over time. Differences were found in the developments of influence between the predictors for the two attitudes. Figures 3a and 3b show the deviation from the main effects of religiosity and education for opposition to euthanasia and negative attitude towards homosexuality. Religiousness has a positive main effect on opposition to euthanasia and homosexuality. For euthanasia, the deviation of the main effect is negative, which indicates a decreasing influence over time. For opposition to homosexuality I find a positive deviance over time. The effect of being religious thus increases over time.

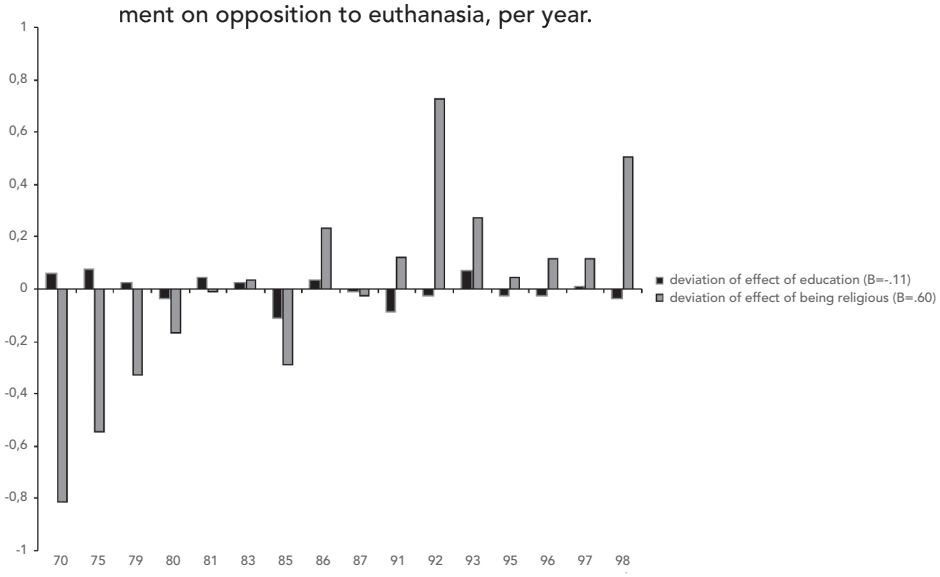
The main effect of educational attainment is negative for both subjects. The higher the education the respondent completed, the lower her objection to euthanasia and homosexuality.

Table 4.3 Random slope effects for being non-religious and educational attainment over years for the negative attitude towards homosexuals and opposition towards euthanasia

	opposition towards euthanasia		negative attitude towards homosexuals	
	b	s.e.	b	s.e.
Year random intercept variance	.21**	.09	.37**	.16
Religious random slope variance	.60**	.07	.33**	.10
Year intercept by non-religious slope covariance	.16**	.07	.12*	.07
Year random intercept variance	.05*	.03	.39**	.18
Educational attainment random slope variance	-.11**	.01	-.22**	.03
Year intercept by educational attainment slope covariance	.00	.00	.01	.00

*Notes ~p < 0.10 *p < 0.05 **p < 0.01*
Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1998

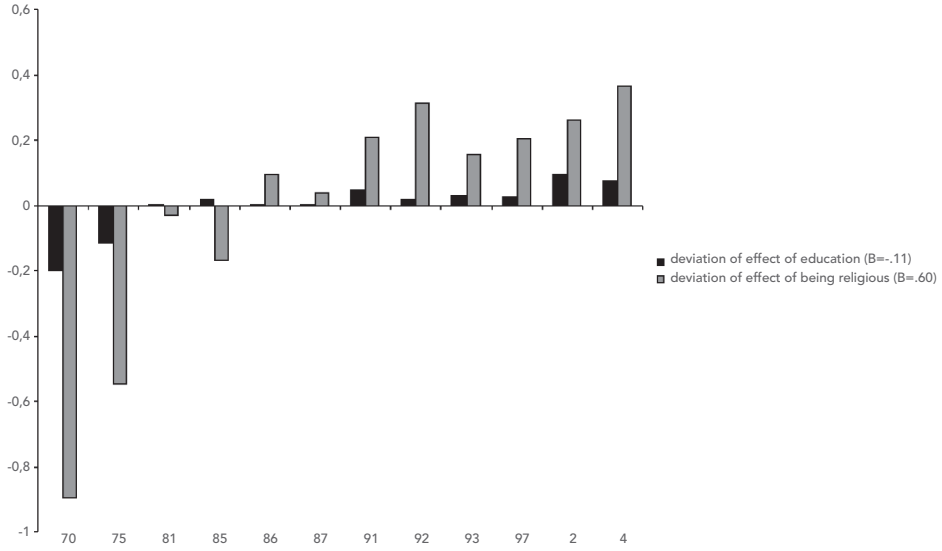
Figure 4.3a Deviation from the main effect of being religious and educational attainment on opposition to euthanasia, per year.



Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1998

Over the years, the effect of educational attainment on attitude towards euthanasia does not change. There is no significant interaction effect to be found in Table 4.3, and indeed the bar reflecting the deviation in effect of educational attainment over the years in Figure 4.3a hardly varies. For negative attitude towards homosexual behaviour, the result is different. The main effect of education is negative. The higher the completed educational level of the respondents, the less negative their attitude towards homosexuals. The deviation of this effect increases over time, thus the effect of educational attainment on negative attitude towards homosexuals diminishes over the years in the Netherlands. My results on the expected increase in the differences between religious and non-religious individuals and between higher and lower educated individuals are only partly supported.

Figure 4.3b Deviation from the main effect of being religious and educational attainment on the attitude toward homosexual lifestyles, per year.



Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1997; European Social Survey 2002-2004

4.5 Summary and Discussion

If Holland is a place of horrors, it has been so since the early 1990s. Although more tolerant legislation came about at that time, public opinion had already accepted euthanasia and homosexual lifestyles in preceding years. Attitudes towards both euthanasia and homosexuals do not seem to undergo much more change, despite the increased media attention for these topics. In previous research it was demonstrated that the variance in homosexual intolerance in the Netherlands is nowadays much more visible in attitudes towards same-sex marriages and adoption of children by same-sex couples (Van de Meerendonk & Scheepers , 2004) than in the general attitude towards homosexuals. The trend in attitudes towards euthanasia had not been investigated previously for the Netherlands.

I formulated seven hypotheses. My first hypothesis was confirmed. The trend in opposition towards both euthanasia and homosexuals can be partly explained by a changing composition of society, most notably at the level of religiosity of consecutive birth cohorts. The second and third hypotheses were not corroborated by my results. The percentage of Christian Democrats in government, be it contemporary or during socialisation, did not affect attitudes towards both subjects. The fourth, fifth and sixth hypotheses concerned specific time-varying circumstances, for which I obtained mixed results. My final hypothesis on the increasing effects of individual-level effects over time

was partly confirmed for religiosity, but had to be refuted completely for educational attainment.
As presented above, the level of secularisation affects both attitudes. Religion turned out to be the most important factor in explaining both the attitudes and the changes in attitudes overall. Specific period indicators for attitudes were also of importance, albeit not very large. Although some important period indicators for explaining attitudinal change were identified, other indicators, such as media attention for specific issues, might do better.
Men turned out to be more opposed to euthanasia and to homosexuals than women. Educational attainment influenced both attitudes too, as expected. I found that the effect of educational attainment did not grow stronger over time. Instead, it stabilised for the attitude towards euthanasia and weakened for the attitude towards homosexuals. I have to refute my hypothesis that the effect of educational attainment has become stronger due to an increased homogeneity of the category of the lower educated. Since an overwhelming majority of Dutch citizens does not object to homosexuals, this result might be due to a ceiling effect or to some sort of spill over, whereby the higher educated successfully spread their norms through the community. The difference between religious and non-religious individuals in their attitudes towards both euthanasia and homosexuals has increased, as expected. Both groups seem unable to spread their norm to the other group.

For attitudes towards euthanasia and homosexuals, the cohort effects operate mainly through the changing composition of society with regard to religiousness. When controlling for composition of society by including individual characteristics in my models, the largest drop in year-level variance is observed. Cohort socialisation explanations in particular should be more thoroughly tested.

Chapter V
An evaluation of recalling attitudes in survey research[8]

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss my research into the use of recalled attitudes in survey research for making causal inferences. The use of retrospective measurements has become common practice in many areas within the social sciences. Research that makes use of retrospective accounts of for instance past labour market careers, sports activities, religious participation and voting behaviour is relatively common (Blossfeld & Mayer, 1988; De Vries, 2006; Giuliano, Popp & Knight, 2000; Lubbers, Scheepers & Billiet, 2000; Need, 1997; Norris, 2005), since it is a time- and cost-effective way of gathering data over a longer period. Numerous studies regarding the accuracy and validity of retrospectively gathered data on hard facts have appeared (Berney & Blane, 1997; Freedman et al., 1988). However, when it comes to attitudes there is much more resistance towards the use of retrospective data. Some sociologists tend to dismiss retrospective attitude questions altogether, although others do use them. Recent examples are retrospectively addressing motives for divorce (De Graaf & Kalmijn, 2006), parenting styles (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2006) or past parental gender roles attitudes as socialisation forces (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). Much earlier, Haggard, Brekstad and Skard (1960) found that out of five categories, general attitudes were recalled second best, after the 'hard facts', but better than e.g. anxieties, which are sometimes studied by criminologists focusing on victimisation. I will address the retrospective measurement of attitudes with the following three questions: *To what extent are people capable of recalling their past attitudes towards homosexuality, euthanasia and ethnic minorities in the Netherlands?* (1), *Who is better in recalling past attitudes?* (2), *and Can retrospective attitude measurements be used to make valid inferences in the study of attitude change?* (3) The first question was never answered for the three issues in this study. The second question was never addressed systematically. The third question I pose is most innovative. With two exceptions dating from the 1970s (Yarrow, Campbell & Burton 1970; Powers, Goudy & Keith, 1978), I was unable to locate any studies that addressed this last question. I make use of a panel that gathers contemporary information on attitudes in 1995 and current 2006 attitudes, as well as a retrospective account of attitudes in 1995, as reported in 2006.

An early overview of the literature on retrospective attitude measurement lists an impressive number of studies that deal with informant accuracy and retrospective or autobiographic questioning on topics ranging from hospitalisation to signing petitions (Bernard et al., 1984). They report generally inaccurate results, and conclude that more research on the accuracy of retrospective questioning is needed. An interesting approach is to study the similarities between two retrospective accounts of demographic events. Beckett et al. (2001) measured two of these retrospective accounts twelve years

[8] A slightly different version of this chapter is forthcoming in the European Sociological Review (Jaspers, Lubbers and De Graaf, 2008). An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences (QMSS) and European Survey Research Association (ESRA) conferences in Prague, June 2007.

apart, and found a large degree of consistency between them. There have been a few attempts to evaluate the validity and reliability of retrospective attitude measurements in survey research. One of the most appealing studies is that on the Bennington women, who attended the liberal Bennington college in the 1930s and who were traced both in the 1960s and 1980s in order to be re-interviewed (Alwin, Cohen & Newcomb, 1991). In the 1980s, retrospective accounts of their political orientations going 50 years back in time were gathered. Although the authors do find a reasonable degree of accuracy when the women involved report back on their political ideologies of the 1930s, they discourage the use of retrospective accounts of attitudes as sole measurement. Powers, Goudy and Keith (1978) compared contemporaneous data to recalled data on a variety of attitudes as well as hard facts over ten years, and found that individual attitudes were poorly reconstructed but that correlational studies were possible. Yarrow, Campbell and Burton (1970) gathered both contemporary and retrospective data three to 30 years apart on mother's and child's perceptions of family life. Correlations between recall and contemporaneous data varied strongly. They also compared bivariate relations with other variables between the contemporaneously and retrospectively gathered data, with varying results.

Few studies have moved beyond the reliability question of retrospective attitude measures. With the exception of Yarrow et al. (1970) and Powers et al. (1978), previous studies tend not to deal with whether retrospective attitudinal measures can be used for making causal inferences about the reasons for attitude change within individuals. The present study will attend precisely to this issue.

Before I continue, the question of what attitudes are and how they are arrived at in a survey needs to be addressed. Some argue that attitudes are stable constructs with an evaluative component that people formed during adolescence. Throughout people's lives, attitudes then remain similar (Glenn, 1980). More recently, the idea has become widely used that attitudes are temporary constructs (Wilson & Hodges, 1992) based on the availability of information that may vary with context, mood or previous question in a survey. This latter view on attitudes would indicate that people show random answer patterns on attitude questions in a survey, and implicitly mean that people will be unable to recall any previous attitudes. Even though there is compelling evidence that attitudes are indeed somewhat unstable, Wilson and Hodges (1992) argue against the idea that individuals can switch randomly between the extremes of an attitude dimension. Rather, people have a certain bandwidth in which they can take a position towards a certain issue. Furthermore, some attitudes are stronger, and for that reason more stable and more easily remembered, even when a change in attitudes has taken place. Some factors associated with increased stability are importance or knowledge attached to the attitude. Beckett and colleagues (2001) argued that the salience of pre-manipulation attitudes was a factor in reporting the correct attitudes of an earlier point in time. The salience of an attitude object can be described as some feature that makes this object stand out from other objects, on e.g. emotional or cognitive grounds. Salient

attitudes are more easily accessed and better recalled. My strategy is to maximise the average saliency of the attitudes studied, by choosing three issues that have been debated intensively over the last decade in the Netherlands: acceptance of homosexual relationships, the possibility of euthanasia and the presence of Moslem minority groups in the Netherlands. By choosing three attitudes in these highly visible domains, I expect to minimise the occurrence of respondents inferring their past attitudes from their behaviours due to the existence of so-called non-attitudes towards these topics.

5.2 Expectations

When writing about the recollection of previous attitudes, I do not imply that anyone would be able to write down her attitude towards climate change on December 11th, 1981 compared to her opinion on February 6th, 1983. In this sense, recalling past attitudes is different from recalling past unemployment spells, of which people have specific dates in mind that can be recorded on the paperwork that unemployment spells often require. Rather, people construct a history of their own attitudinal development towards some more profound issues; when asked to look back, they reconstruct via estimation their attitude at a vaguely defined earlier point in time, using some implicit theory of self and of continuity and change that is for some reason most desirable (Karney & Frye, 2002; Ross, 1989). Previous research indicates that people use their own implicit theory about the general life course development concerning attitudes to reconstruct their own attitudinal history. Two common implicit theories are a false belief of consistency, that would most likely apply to older respondents, and an exaggeration of the difference between past and present, which could occur when a change is expected due to external circumstances. I will return shortly to both biases. The issue of whether a recalled attitude could be a more accurate evaluation of a past situation given that people may have reached a more sophisticated standard to measure their attitudes by will not be addressed.

For the remainder of this paper, I will use phrases recalling and recollecting past attitudes in reference to the process described here. Psychologists and sociologists have identified a number of problematic processes that hamper the reliable recollection of past attitudes in experimental conditions (Schachter, 2002). First, I address the commonly found biases in retrospective measurements that are believed to work through the implicit theories of self that people have. Second, I discuss who might be more accurate in recalling. Third, I will turn to the issue of making causal inferences with retrospective attitudinal measurements. To prevent reader confusion, a consistent terminology is used throughout the remainder of this chapter. *Contemporaneous attitudes* were measured in the past and reflect attitudes at that point in time; *recalled attitudes* are measured in the present and reflect attitudes at a previous point in time; *current attitudes* are measured in the present and reflect attitudes at this point in time.

Biases

Apart from whether or not people are able to recollect previous attitudes, the issue remains of whether people show patterns in their deviance from previous attitudes when recalling. This section addresses two of the most common biases people have shown when recalling their previous attitudes: a false belief of consistency and an inclination to project the aggregate change in society on their own attitudinal history. Many of the early studies on attitude recall are panel studies of child development (Haggard, Brekstad & Skard, 1960; Yarrow, Campbell & Burton, 1970). Pioneers in the field of recollection of political attitudes tried to reconstruct past partisanship using retrospective as well as contemporaneous data (Niemi, Katz & Newman, 1980). They concluded that the party identification recall questions are 'woefully inadequate' in reproducing past partisanship at both the individual and the aggregate level. However, those who did not change their partisanship during the period studied were very capable of recalling their previous partisanship. It was only those that altered preferences who were less likely to reconstruct their earlier partisanship. The majority of the ones who had changed partisanship did not report any change whatsoever, even though partisanship is an attitude that is regularly expressed in voting or party memberships. This finding is in congruence with the psychological literature. One of the most common implicit theories of self-development that people have is that they have stable attitudes over the life course. Schachter (2002) refers to the above-mentioned phenomena as the consistency bias. People infer their previous attitude from their current one, under the false belief of personal attitudinal consistency.

The recollection of past attitudes is not only hindered by current attitudes but by current or previous behaviours as well. Self-perception theory claims that people often infer their (past) attitudes from their behaviours, because of having had non-attitudes prior to the questioning. Bem and McConnell (1970) performed some classic experiments with which they showed that participants, after writing counter-attitudinal essays for no or a small financial compensation, altered their attitudes and then reported having this attitude all along with no recollection of their previously stated attitudes. Those who wrote the counter-attitudinal essays for a large compensation did not alter their attitudes. They concluded that the participants inferred from their behaviour – writing an essay for no compensation – that they must agree with the stand taken in it, a process referred to as self-perception theory.

Closely related to self-perception is dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957). However, where self-perception theory assumes a lack of a stable initial attitude, dissonance theory argues that initial attitudes are changed due to a perceived cognitive dissonance in one's attitudes and behaviours. The avoidance of dissonance in order to maintain a coherent self-image would people lead to change their initial attitudes into ones that are more consistent with their current behaviour. For the present research, both self-perception and dissonance theory would argue that people, whether for reasons of initial non-attitudes or avoidance of cognitive dissonance, would infer their past

attitude from filling out their current attitude. Markus (1984) also reports finding a higher correlation between recalled and current political attitudes than between recalled and contemporaneous attitudes. I thus expect a bias towards the present attitude when people report a recalled attitude. I will call this, in line with previous researchers, the *consistency bias hypothesis*: people tend to believe they have always held their current attitudes and thus underreport actual change rates. Hence those who did not change attitudes will be much better in recalling previous attitudes than those who did experience change. Corresponding is the empirical finding that aggregate attitudes that have not changed much are more easily reconstructed with retrospective data than the aggregates of attitudes that underwent more change (Smith, 1984).

A confounding factor might be another recollection bias that was identified by Markus (1984). He found that people infer their own previous attitudes from how they believe that the general trend in aggregate attitudes has developed. For instance, if public opinion has become more accommodating towards certain behaviours, people might infer that they have become more accommodating as well. Again, people use an implicit theory of attitude development to reconstruct their previous attitude towards an issue, only this time they do not use a theory on their own development but rather on the development of the aggregate. For instance, attitudes towards homosexuality have become much more tolerant in the Netherlands over the past 35 years (Jaspers, Lubbers & De Graaf, 2007), a development often addressed in the media and politics. People looking back assume that since everyone has become much more tolerant towards homosexuality, they were probably less favourable in the past as well. This bias would lead us to expect that those who changed their attitudes in the same direction as the general trend are more likely to correctly recall their previously stated attitudes than those who changed in the opposite direction. I will call this the *aggregate trend bias hypothesis.*

Group differences in accuracy

I expect an underreporting of change when comparing contemporaneous and recalled accounts of the same attitudes. In the related field of attitude stability research, it is sometimes argued that two groups of people exist, often referred to as the black-and-white model (Converse, 1970). There are those with and those without an attitude towards any given subject. People with real attitudes are considered highly stable in their attitudes over time, whereas people with non-attitudes are highly unstable due to random answer patterns on repeated attitude questions. However, the categorisation that is used in this line of research often denies the possibility of actual attitudinal change. I propose a different categorisation for this study: people with stable attitudes that they can or cannot recall, and people who changed their attitudes over time and are or aren't able to recall their previous attitudes. Regardless of the (in)stability of their attitudes, some people might be better able to correctly recall past attitudes than others.

So far, the findings are limited and inconsistent. There is some empirical evidence that women are better in recalling certain events (Beckett et al., 2001). Auriat (1993) argues that women were socialised more to record important events in personal lives. I will test whether women are also more accurate in their attitude recollection than men. Education is sometimes considered to improve retrospective accounts, because more reasoning is involved in the construction of attitudes. When the formation of an attitude requires extensive reasoning and weighing of pros and cons, self-perception or dissonance theory is less likely to apply. Also, the more knowledge people have, the smaller the bandwidth of their attitudes appears to be (Wilson, Kraft & Dunn, 1989). Higher educated individuals are also more often correct when providing retrospective accounts of events (Hahn, Eaker & Rolka, 1997). I test whether higher educated individuals are better able to recall their previous attitude than those with a lower education.

Two of the issues studied, euthanasia and homosexuality, are of special importance in relation to religion, since (almost) all denominations reject these practices. Because religious people in the Netherlands live in a highly secular environment with accommodating legislation on both euthanasia and homosexuality, chances are that more debate was involved in their attitude formation towards these issues and that they thus might be much more aware of their attitudes towards them. I test whether the religious are better able to recall their previous attitudes than those who consider themselves not religious.

Women who claimed to be certain of the past events they reported, were indeed more often correct about these events (Bowman, Sanson-Fisher & Redman, 1997). Perhaps for individuals who state more certainty in their recall, the events are more salient, so that they are better able to recall them. I test whether those who claim a higher degree of certainty in their retrospective account are better able to recollect their previous attitude than people who are less certain about their recalled attitudes. Even though this may seem straightforward, if a certainty claim from respondents about their changes is a good predictor for the actual change, this information is valuable in studying reported changes.

Causal inferences with retrospective data

I am interested in the possibility of studying the effects of certain, salient events on attitudinal change. This study compares whether the use of recalled attitudes leads to different results for the effects of these events than the use of contemporaneous attitudes. The extent to which recalled attitudes and contemporaneous attitudes affect the occurrence of these salient events is also examined – after all, the experience of events can also be dependent on the attitudes prior to the events.

A consistent finding in the literature on retrospective data is known as interference of events (Baddeley, 1979). People are unable to distinguish between all relevant events, and mix elements of separate events into new ones. Sometimes they remember only the most recent events. Gutek (1978) and Auriat (1993) also emphasised that people

forget to mention events or mention only those events that are somehow most salient to them. For this reason, I will identify salient events that might trigger attitude change in people's lives. I have tried to identify those events that make relatively large impressions on people and which have an obvious link to the attitudes studied. For instance, the death of a spouse might alter the attitude towards euthanasia, or the coming out of a relative might change an attitude towards homosexuality. My expectation about the effects of such events is based mainly on the contact hypothesis (Forbes, 1997; Lemm, 2006; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Wagner et al., 2006), which states that interpersonal contacts with groups identified as other than the own group often invoke an attitudinal change. Here the concept of contact is broadened to experiences with attitude-related personal events. By choosing these salient events, I furthermore believe to be maximising the number of reported events.
Previously, Yarrow et al. (1970) obtained conflicting results when comparing mothers' reports on their relationship with their children. Physical abuse provided similar correlational results with other variables, whether reported contemporaneously or retrospectively, whereas childhood trauma led to inconsistent associations. Powers et al. (1978) state that recalled attitudes may be used cautiously in correlational studies, for only small differences between the use of these recalled attitudes and the contemporaneous data were obtained. Lazarsfeld (1939) already pointed to the phenomenon that moderately correlating indices, that both correlate equally strong with a third variable, are interchangeable predictors of the third.

I expect an underreporting of change in the recalled data, but not random answer patterns on retrospective questions. Respondents will most likely be either correct in their recall, biased towards the present (and thus underreporting change), or reporting the most common change in attitudes. People who have experienced salient events related to the attitudes studied are more likely correct in their recall, since the attitude objects will be more salient to them. I call this the *event effect hypothesis*, which claims that recalled attitude data can be used to make valid inferences about possible causes of individual change and about the occurrence of attitude-related events.

5.3 Methods

Data collection

I make use of two waves of a national survey in the Netherlands, the SOCON (Social and Cultural Research in the Netherlands) 1995 (Eisinga et al. 1996) and 2006 (Jaspers & Lubbers, 2007). The initial wave, in 1995, was never intended to serve as a panel but was part of a series of repeated cross sections. However, participants were asked whether they would agree with a follow-up interview at a later point in time, a question that was positively responded to by a vast majority of those who took part in the survey (96%). The first wave was carried out as a multi-stage cluster sample face-to face survey between September 1995 and February 1996. After the interview, participants were

mailed a questionnaire with the request to fill it out and return it to the researchers; 87 percent of the respondents complied with this request. The net response rate of the survey was 51.5 percent, which is not less than usual in face-to-face interviews in the Netherlands. The survey respondents were representative of the Dutch population on most demographic characteristics.

The second wave took place between February and November of 2006. I located 1504 respondents out of the 1929 initial participants who had agreed to a follow-up in 1995 –approximately 78 percent – with the help of telephone listings and the Municipal Basic Administrations (GBA's). Of these 1504, 57 were either hospitalised or deceased; 854 out of the final sample of 1447 completed a questionnaire, resulting in a net response rate of 59 percent, a very high rate for a mail questionnaire in the Netherlands. I checked birth dates and gender of the respondents between the two waves. If any discrepancies were found such as a different birth year between the two waves, which could indicate that the two questionnaires had been filled out by two different individuals, I deleted the respondent prior to the analyses – 42 individuals were deleted for this reason, which resulted in a final dataset of 812 respondents. The initial 1995 survey consists of 2019 respondents, which means that 40 percent of the initial respondents completed a second questionnaire 11 years later. The 812 respondents do not significantly differ from the original 1995 dataset in terms of religiosity and gender composition. Both the highest and lowest educated were less likely to cooperate in the 2006 wave. Regarding the central attitudes in this research, cooperation in 2006 was not dependent on the attitudes people had on homosexuality, euthanasia and ethnic minorities. Only people who had stereotypical attitudes towards Muslims in 1995 were slightly underrepresented in the 2006 sample.

Different numbers of N are used throughout this chapter. In the 1995 survey, not all respondents were presented with the same questions, as two versions of the questionnaire were used: in one the questions regarding ethnic minorities were included, in the other the item on homosexuality. The item on euthanasia was in the part of the questionnaire that was presented to all 1995 respondents. Information is available on almost all respondents concerning their recalled and current attitudes.

Table 5.1 Descriptives for attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and ethnic minorities in 1995, retrospectively and in 2006

	N	Min	Max	Mean	St dev.
Attitude towards euthanasia 1995	585	0	1	.15	.35
Attitude towards euthanasia retrospectively	585	0	1	.18	.38
Attitude towards euthanasia 2006	585	0	1	.16	.37
Attitude towards homosexuality 1995	382	1	5	2.52	1.07
Attitude towards homosexuality retrospectively	382	1	5	2.55	1.07
Attitude towards homosexuality 2006	382	1	5	2.29	.98
Attitude towards ethnic minorities 1995	345	1	5	2.67	.79
Moslem women with scarf do not adapt	*342*	*1*	*5*	*2.83*	*1.10*
Moslems easily resort to violence	*323*	*1*	*5*	*2.80*	*.95*
Minorities are a threat to our own culture	*345*	*1*	*5*	*2.38*	*.93*
Attitude towards ethnic minorities retrospectively	345	1	5	3.05	.86
Moslem women with scarf do not adapt	*345*	*1*	*5*	*3.21*	*.99*
Moslems easily resort to violence	*345*	*1*	*5*	*2.99*	*.99*
Minorities are a threat to our own culture	*345*	*1*	*5*	*2.93*	*.99*
Attitude towards ethnic minorities 2006	345	1	5	3.06	.89
Moslem women with scarf do not adapt	*345*	*1*	*5*	*2.93*	*.99*
Moslems easily resort to violence	*345*	*1*	*5*	*3.11*	*1.05*
Minorities are a threat to our own culture	*343*	*1*	*5*	*3.17*	*1.08*

Scales: For the attitude towards euthanasia from 0: allowed to 1: not allowed; for the attitude towards homosexuality from 1: completely not objecting to 5: totally objecting; for the attitude towards ethnic minorities from 1:totally disagree to 5: totally agree
Source: SOCON 1995 and 2006

Dependent variables

The three researched attitudes are measured in three different ways. Table 5.1 gives an overview of them. First the contemporaneous attitude is shown, next the recalled account of the same attitude, and finally the measurement of the current attitude. I recoded all items so that higher scores indicate a higher level of intolerance towards the issue. The aggregate attitude towards euthanasia did not change between the years 1995 and 2006.[9] The retrospective account of the 1995 attitude shows only a minor increase in recalled change compared to actual change. The aggregate attitude towards homosexuality has become less negative over 11 years, a finding that is reflected in the retrospective accounts of the aggregate 1995 attitude.

[9] Legally, euthanasia is very narrowly defined. Most respondents will include some medical procedures in the term 'euthanasia' that form another legal category. For example, palliative sedation or dehydration, both of which are more common and often discussed with relatives of the patients involved prior to the start of the necessary procedures, will in many cases be interpreted as euthanasia by the respondents. In the items on euthanasia, the option 'that depends' was included as an answer category in 1995 and 2006. Respondents who checked this answer were not included in the analyses.

The reconstruction of the aggregate attitudes towards euthanasia and homosexuality using recall data is remarkably accurate. Attitude towards ethnic minorities was measured by three items that form one scale, with reliability coefficients of .98 and .85 in 1995 and 2006 respectively.[10] The aggregate attitude in 1995 was much less intolerant than the current or recalled aggregates. However, upon closer inspection it appears that the large difference between the recalled and contemporaneous attitudes towards ethnic minorities is primarily caused by the item on headscarves. The aggregates for the other two items are in the correct direction. Overall, the aggregate attitudes are reasonably well reconstructed using the recalled data.

Explanatory variables

Some explanatory variables in my models on recall accuracy were included, using the same variables as controls in the models on attitude change and event occurrence. A variable was included on whether the respondent was *female* or not, and age of the respondent in years in 2006. Highest level of education completed in 2006 was asked for, and answers were recoded to number of years necessary for the reported level. *Education in years* ranges from 6 (primary education) to 20 (completed PhD). I asked whether respondents were *religious* or not and how often they attended church. *Church attendance* ranges from 0 (never) to 4 (more than once a week). A dummy variable was also constructed for whether or not the respondent *left the church* between 1995 and 2006. With respect to the attitudes towards euthanasia and homosexuality I asked the respondents, after they answered the recall questions on their attitudes towards these issues, their degree of *certainty* on their recollection on a 4-point scale ranging from very uncertain to very certain.

Respondents were questioned in 2006 about various important events they might have experienced. This section of the questionnaire was placed several pages after the current and recall attitude questions. Respondents were asked whether they had ever experienced a series of events, and if they had, at which age this had happened to them for the first time and how often during the last decade. A series of events were identified that might invoke a change in attitudes. With respect to euthanasia I asked whether they had ever experienced a death in the family, a serious illness in the family, euthanasia in the family, and whether they had ever had a serious illness themselves. For homosexuality I asked whether they had ever experienced the coming out of a friend or of a relative. On ethnic minorities, I asked them whether they had ever attended a marriage between two minority members, attended a mixed marriage or visited an ethnic minority member in her home, and whether they had ever been threatened by a member of an ethnic minority group. For all the events reported I determined whether they had occurred for the first time between 1995 and 2006,

[10] Two more items on ethnic minorities in the Netherlands were included in the questionnaires, but these are not included in our analyses as they formed a second factor in an exploratory factor analysis conducted for both years.

whether they occurred at all – first time or not – between 1995 and 2006, and how often they had happened between those years. Events that took place prior to 1995 are expected to have influenced the 1995 attitude, not the current one. Appendix A lists the complete range of events and the incidences.

Finally, ethnic minority members were not asked for their attitudes towards ethnic minorities in 1995, therefore this group was excluded from the analyses (N=50). Comparably, respondents who indicated that they were anything other than (almost) exclusively heterosexual on a question regarding their current sexual preference were excluded from the analyses with regard to attitudes towards homosexuality (N=37).

5.4 Results

First, I present tables that indicate the degree to which individual respondents are able to correctly perceive their attitude change. There will be some degree of random measurement error in each of the three measurements, which inflates the gross change rate (Bassi et al., 2000). However, the non-random biases are expected to be much larger, thus decreasing the level of change reported. Second, I will show who is better in recalling past attitudes, by predicting the contemporaneous attitude with the recalled attitude and interacting this with respondent characteristics to find factors that facilitate accuracy in recall. Third, I turn to the effects of personal experiences on attitude change towards euthanasia, homosexuality and ethnic minorities, and the effects of previous attitudes on selected personal experiences. Since the three attitudes are measured in three different ways, three modelling strategies were chosen. An estimate of a logistic regression model for euthanasia attitudes as dependent on events in the sphere of death and illnesses was made, an OLS regression model for attitude towards homosexuality as dependent on events concerning coming into contact with lesbians and gay men, and an auto-regressive and cross-lagged structural equation model for attitude towards ethnic minorities, including a multi-item measurement of the attitude. Logistic regression models are estimated for all three issues for the occurrence of events as dependent on previously held attitudes. The effects of previous attitudes on the occurrence of events regarding ethnic minorities are estimated within the same – auto-regressive and cross lagged – structural equation models as that mentioned above.

Biases

In this section I compare the observed changes in attitudes (i.e. the current level compared to the contemporaneous level) to the perceived changes in attitudes (i.e. the current level compared to the recalled level). Appendices 5B, 5C and 5D show the full tables for contemporaneous by recalled attitudes, split by the levels of the current attitude.

Table 5.2 shows my findings on the recollection of euthanasia attitudes. Out of the total sample of 585, 512 can recall their previous attitude. However, this is largely due to the people who did not have an objective change between contemporaneous and current attitudes. Nearly all of them claim that they had the same opinion on euthanasia as they actually had. Those who did change can only recall so in just over one in six cases. Those who became more positive are slightly better in correctly assessing their previous attitude than those who turned negative. The odds ratio for correctly recalling a change towards less opposition against correctly recalling a change towards more opposition is 1.42. Aggregate attitudes as well as legislation have become more accommodating in the Netherlands towards the issue of euthanasia (Jaspers, Lubbers & De Graaf 2007). People seem better able to recall a previous attitude if it was in line with the observed aggregate trend. Both the consistency bias and the aggregate trend bias hypothesis are supported for attitude towards euthanasia.

Table5. 2 Cross-tabulations for the perceived change versus observed change in opposition to euthanasia

		Perceived change in opposition			**Total**
		more	**none**	**less**	
Observed change in opposition	**more**	6	33	0	39
		15.4%	84.6%	.0%	100.0%
	none	2	499	13	514
		.4%	97.1%	2.5%	100.0%
	less	0	25	7	32
		.0%	78.1%	21.9%	100.0%
	total	8	557	20	585
		1.4%	95.2%	3.4%	100.0%

Source: SOCON 1995 and 2006

Table 5.3 gives cross-tabulations for the perceived and observed change in attitude towards homosexuality. Three-quarters of those respondents who became more negative about homosexuality are under the impression that their attitude did not change. This impression is in line with the expected consistency bias. Only 7 percent of those respondents who changed towards more intolerance can correctly assess their previous attitude towards homosexuality. The persons who became more positive over the years are better in recalling their change. One-third indicates that they used to be more opposed to homosexuality. The odds ratio for correctly recalling a positive change in attitude towards homosexuality against correctly recalling a negative change is a high 7.13. As the aggregate trend in the Netherlands was towards a more permissive stance on homosexual issues, people are more likely to believe that they themselves have become more less opposed as well. This trend has been much more obvious than the trends in attitudes towards euthanasia and ethnic minorities, which is probably why this odds ratio is so high. Of the people that remained stable between 1995 and 2006, nearly four in five also recalls being stable. Still, one in five incorrectly applies the aggregate trend on their own attitudinal history, believing that they have become less opposed to homosexuality.

Table 5.3 Cross-tabulations for the perceived change versus observed change in intolerance towards homosexuality

		Perceived change in intolerance			**Total**
		more	**none**	**less**	
Observed change in intolerance	**more**	4	45	10	59
		6.8%	76.3%	16.9%	100.0%
	none	3	155	42	200
		1.5%	77.5%	21.0%	100.0%
	less	1	80	42	123
		.8%	65.0%	34.1%	100.0%
	total	8	280	94	382
		2.1%	73.3%	24.6%	100.0%

Source: SOCON 1995 and 2006

Table 5.4 gives the cross-tabulations of perceived versus observed change in disapproval of ethnic minorities. Coincidentally, again one-third of those respondents who changed in the direction of the aggregate trend in the Netherlands perceives the observed change, whereas only 15 percent of the respondents who became more positive towards ethnic minorities is aware of this change. The odds ratio for correctly recalling a negative change against correctly recalling a positive change is 2.03

Table 5.4 Cross-tabulations for the perceived change versus observed change in intolerance towards ethnic minorities

		Perceived change in intolerance			**Total**
		more	**none**	**less**	
Observed change in intolerance	**more**	46	88	13	147
		31.3%	59.9%	8.8%	100.0%
	none	9	121	29	159
		5.7%	76.1%	18.2%	100.0%
	less	2	31	6	39
		5.1%	79.5%	15.4%	100.0%
	total	57	240	48	345
		16.5%	69.6%	13.9%	100.0%

Source: SOCON 1995; 2006

I conclude this section by stating that strong systematic biases occur overall in recollection, both towards a consistency bias and to a lesser extent towards an aggregate trend bias. Individual descriptions seem generally unreliable when based on recalled attitudes.

Group differences in recall accuracy

Table 5.5 presents group differences in recall accuracy. I estimated a (logistic) regression model with the contemporaneous attitude as a predictor for the recall attitude towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities. Next, I added different grouping variables with an interaction term to search for groups that might differ in their recall accuracy. Hardly any significant differences between groups were found in the extent to which their contemporaneous accounts are related to the recalled accounts of the same attitudes. Contrary to my expectations and to earlier findings, women are not better than men in recalling attitudes towards all three topics. The interaction terms between age and the three attitudes are all negative, and – if they would have reached significance - imply that the correlations between contemporaneous and recalled attitudes are smaller when one is older. The interaction terms between education and the three attitudes are all positive. The higher educated have a marginally larger effect from their contemporaneous attitude on their recalled attitude, so they are slightly better in recalling. For those who are religious the effect of the contemporaneous attitude towards ethnic minorities is smaller than for non-religious respondents. The more often respondents visit the church, the smaller the effect of the contemporaneous attitude toward euthanasia on the recalled attitude. The significant religious group differences seem arbitrary, and never consistent over the three different attitudes. I cannot refute the hypothesis that respondents that are more certain when recalling their attitude are indeed better in recalling. The effects from the contemporaneous attitudes towards euthanasia and homosexuality on the recalled attitudes are larger (and closer to one) when respondents are more certain about their recollections.

Some additional OLS regression analyses were performed to find out who claims to be more certain in recalling a previous attitude (not shown in table). Women, the higher educated and those who are religious claim a higher level of certainty in recalling a previous attitude towards homosexuality. Those who did not change attitudes between 1995 and 2006 also claim to be more certain about their recollections towards both euthanasia and homosexuality.

Table 5.5 Interactions with the contemporaneous attitudes towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minority members as predictors of the recalled attitudes

	euthanasia *logistic regression parameters*				homosexuality *regression parameters*			ethnic minorities *regression parameters*		
	B		s.e.	exp(b)	b		s.e.	b		s.e.
contemporaneous	2.842	***	.267	17.148	.606	***	.041	.611	***	.049
contemporaneous	2.826	***	.330	16.870	.613	***	.041	.600	***	.049
female	-.049		.469	.952	.006		.013	-.109		.088
*female**	.025		.471	1.026	-.007		.006	.030		.025
contemporaneous										
contemporaneous	5.079	***	.825	160.484	.691	***	.108	.665	***	.089
age	-.002		.007	.998	.004		.006	.002		.005
*age**	-.040	**	.014	.961	-.002		.002	-.001		.001
contemporaneous										
contemporaneous	1.328	~	.825	3.773	.573	***	.070	.458	**	.165
education	-.119	~	.068	.888	-.009		.011	-.026		.042
*education**	.136	*	.069	1.146	.003		.005	.012		.013
contemporaneous										
contemporaneous	2.377	***	.477	10.769	.605	***	.041	.709	***	.069
religious	-1.575	**	.517	.207	-.019		.027	.629	~	.334
*religious**	.328		.591	1.388	.007		.008	-.199	*	.098
contemporaneous										
contemporaneous	4.474	***	.387	87.774	.604	***	.041	.665	***	.064
church attendance	.003		.023	1.003	-.005		.011	.101		.080
*church**	-.912	***	.135	.402	.003		.003	-.026		.021
contemporaneous										
contemporaneous	1.017		1.234	2.764	-.055		.170			
certainty	-.016		.307	.984	-.378	*	.159			
*certainty**	.537	~	.343	1.710	.182	***	.047			
contemporaneous										

*~ p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*
Source: SOCON 1995 and 2006

Causal inferences with retrospective data

The next expectation concerns the employability of retrospective attitude measurements in survey designs for making causal inferences. Table 5.6 presents the effects of specific events as predictors for the current attitude controlled for contemporaneous versus recalled attitude, whereby the effects of these events are compared each time between the models with contemporaneous attitudes and recalled attitudes.

Two consecutive rows present the nonstandardised b-coefficients and standard errors for the estimated effects of the events using contemporaneous data and recalled data respectively. The columns present first the results for a first occurrence of the event in the 1995-2006 period; second, the effects of any occurrence of the event between 1995-2006; and third, the effects of the number of times the event occurred between 1995 and 2006. I tested the hypotheses that the effects of using the recalled data equal the effects of using the contemporaneous data (Paternoster, Brame, Mazerolle & Piquero 1998; Meertens, 2004)[11]. Significant differences are boxed. Out of 30 compared effect sizes, five were found to differ significantly between use of recalled and contemporaneous accounts.

Four events were included that might alter one's attitude towards euthanasia. Only the first occurrence of one of these, the experience of euthanasia in the family, has a positive effect on approval of euthanasia, although it is only marginally significant. There are some mixed results regarding illness in the family. None of the other relevant events induces an attitudinal change. The signs of the event effects are mostly in the same direction, irrespective of whether the 1995 data or the recall data is used, for death in the family, serious illness in the family, euthanasia in the family and having experienced a serious illness oneself. Only regarding illness in the family was a significant difference found in using the retrospective account or the actual 1995 account when predicting present attitude towards euthanasia.

The experience of a homosexual friend had no effect on current attitude towards homosexuality, and no difference was found between the effects using either recalled or contemporaneous attitudes. The situation is a little different for the experience of the coming out of a homosexual relative. For people experiencing this for the first time between 1995 and 2006, the estimated effect is almost similar for the contemporaneous and recalled attitudes (b= .046 and .043 respectively). Remarkably, for people who filled out having had a homosexual relative after 1995, whereas they possibly had one already before 1995 as well, a different result is found. Here, only when using the contemporaneous attitude do I find that people became more tolerant towards homosexuality.

A positive, significant effect of attending a marriage of two ethnic minority members for the first time between 1995 and 2006 is found. The effect size is larger when using contemporaneous data than when using recalled data. This is the only significant difference in effect size of the events on attitude towards ethnic minorities when comparing contemporaneous attitude and recalled attitude. For visiting an ethnic minority member between 1995 and 2006 (for the first time) no effect was found, regardless of whether contemporaneous attitude or recalled attitude was used to control for.

[11]Different tests were used to assess effect differences. Application of either of the tests resulted in similar findings. In this chapter the results of the following formula are reported: (b1-b2)/sqrt(se_b1**2+se_b2**2).

Table5.6 The effects of events as predictors of current attitude, controlled for previous attitude, age, gender, educational attainment, and religiosity; results from logistic regression models for opposition towards euthanasia, OLS regressions for opposition towards homosexuality and SEM cross-lagged auto regressive models for opposition towards ethnic minorities

	Event occurred for the first time between 1995-2006			Event occurred at all between 1995-2006			aNumber of times event occurred between 1995-2006		
Events related to the attitude towards euthanasia	b		se	b		se	b		se
death in the family CD	-.201		.34	-.062		.34	.036		.07
death in the family RD	-.512		.50	.050		.47	.137		.11
illness in the family CD	-.437		.34	-.662	*	.31	-.009		.07
illness in the family RD	-.569		.47	-.031		.45	.209	~	.12
euthanasia in the family CD	-1.018	~	.62	-.684	~	.40	-.126		.26
euthanasia in the family RD	-.635		.77	-.173		.56	.310		.39
own serious illness CD	-.905		.64	-.086		.41	.121		.27
own serious illness RD	-.155		.81	.629		.59	.641		.41
Events related to the attitude towards homosexuality									
homosexual friend CD	.181		.14	-.127		.09	-.010		.03
homosexual friend RD	.005		.07	-.057		.04	.008		.01
homosexual relative CD	-.046		.19	-.253	**	.09	-.152	**	.05
homosexual relative RD	-.043		.08	-.014		.04	-.011		.03
Events related to the attitude towards ethnic minorities									
present at marriage minorities CD	-.158	*	.08	.022		.05	.034		.05
present at marriage minorities RD	-.015		.04	.011		.04	.007		.04
present at mixed marriage CD	.017		.07	.014		.05	.030		.04
present at mixed marriage RD	-.074	*	.04	-.017		.03	-.012		.03
visit to ethnic minority member CD	-.041		.07	-.003		.04	.070		.73
visit to ethnic minority member RD	-.038		.04	.025		.03	.020		.29
being threatened by ethnic minority member CD	.058		.05	.064		.06	.064		.06
being threatened by ethnic minority member RD	.068	~	.04	.077	*	.04	.073	*	.04

Source: SOCON 1995 and 2006
*RD= recalled data; CD= contemporary data;; ~ p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.*
Boxed cells contain significant differences

Beyond previous attitude, contact has no positive contribution in a person's attitude towards ethnic minorities – contrary to my formulated expectation from contact theory. I did find however a negative effect from a threat experience from an ethnic minority member. Again, the effects from the recalled and the contemporaneous accounts point in the same direction, and do not significantly differ from each other. Here the finding is that, between 1995 and 2006, people were more likely to have an unfavourable attitude towards ethnic minorities when facing a physical threat from them. As with all my analyses regarding ethnic minorities and homosexuality, the analyses dealing with the actual change includes fewer respondents, which is partly the reason for different significance levels. I have to conclude that, even though all effects are close to non-significance and hence smaller than expected, the recall and contemporaneous accounts provide similar signs of the event effects. Tests on differences between the sizes of the effects depending on contemporaneous or recalled attitude show us that they differ significantly in a minority of the analysed events. I cautiously conclude that causal inferences with the recalled data do not lead to different conclusions than when contemporaneous attitudes are used. The word cautious is emphasised here, as the incidences of the events are sometimes low and my dataset is not so large.

Explanations for the occurrence of events

Table 5.7 gives the results for the analyses with previous attitudes as predictors of the occurrence of certain events. These findings have important implications. When the events are not influenced by previous attitudes, controlling for such previous attitudes is not important. In these instances researchers could include events to explain current attitudes, without the need to assess the previous attitude. With respect to attitude towards euthanasia only the effect of the 1995 attitude towards euthanasia on the occurrence of euthanasia in the family between 1995-2006 was estimated, as other events, such as illness of a family member, are logically expected to be independent from the respondent's previous attitude towards euthanasia.

At first glance one immediately notices that there are many more significant influences from previous attitudes on the occurrence of events than the other way round. However, this is not my primary concern for this contribution. Upon taking a closer look at my findings I observe very similar results when using either the contemporaneous or the recalled data.

With respect to euthanasia, a positive contemporaneous attitude increases the chances of experiencing euthanasia in the family between 1995 and 2006. The recalled data provide slightly larger effects, but the differences in effect sizes are far from significant.

With respect to homosexuality, I see that a positive attitude in 1995 clearly influences the occurrence of second and additional experiences with homosexuals, more pronouncedly so with homosexual friend than homosexual relatives. Here the only significant reversed effect is found, comparing the use of the contemporaneous account or the recalled account. Experiencing for the first time a relative being gay

between 1995 and 2006 is influenced positively by the contemporaneous attitude, but negatively by the recalled attitude. Even though neither effect is significant, they differ significantly from one another.

For contacts with ethnic minority members, previous positive attitudes increase the chances of positive contacts with ethnic minority members. Experiencing a threat from an ethnic minority for the first time after 1995 is independent of previous attitude towards ethnic minorities, measured either contemporaneously or retrospectively. Respondents who indicated having been threatened more often, turn out to have started out with more unfavourable attitudes in the first place. The only significant difference found between the use of the contemporaneous data and the recalled data is regarding a first-time visit to ethnic minorities between 1995 and 2006. According to the contemporaneous data, this has led to an increase in positive attitudes towards ethnic minorities. No effect is found when using the recalled data.

Table 5.7 Previous attitudes as predictors of event occurrences, controlled for age, gender, educational attainment, and religiosity; logistic regression models for the first time occurrence of events and the occurrence of events; OLS regressions for the incidence of events related to euthanasia and homosexuality; SEM cross-lagged models for the incidence of events related to ethnic minorities

	Event occurred for the first time between 1995-2006			Event occurred at all between 1995-2006			Number of times event occurred between 1995-2006		
Events related to the attitude towards euthanasia	b		se	b		se	b		se
euthanasia in the family 1995	-.786		.55	-.708	*	.36	-.101		.07
euthanasia in the family RD	-.987	*	.47	-.917	**	.33	-.155	*	.07
Events related to the attitude towards homosexuality									
homosexual friend 1995	-.132		.22	-.525	***	.14	-.226	***	.07
homosexual friend RD	-.005		.16	-.472	***	.10	-.271	***	.06
homosexual relative 1995	.305		.27	-.340	*	.13	-.101	*	.04
homosexual relative RD	-.157		.18	-.448	***	.10	-.150	***	.03
Events related to the attitude towards ethnic minorities									
present at marriage minorities 1995	-.095		.21	-.170		.16	-.173		.16
present at marriage minorities RD	-.370	***	.12	-.295	***	.09	-.286	**	.10
present at mixed marriage 1995	-.428	*	.19	-.230	~	.18	-.260	~	.17
present at mixed marriage RD	-.265	**	.10	-.238	**	.09	-.272	***	.09
visit to ethnic minority member 1995	-.261	*	.16	-.327	**	.13	-.101		1.04
visit to ethnic minority member RD	.007		.11	-.324	***	.07	-.188		.61
being threatened by ethnic minority member 1995	.106		.31	.199		.21	.186		.21
being threatened by ethnic minority member RD	-.051		.13	.151	~	.10	.185	*	.10

*~ p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*
boxed cells contain significant differences
Source: SOCON 1995 and 2006

5.5 Summary and discussion

With a unique dataset, I was able to show to what extent people err in recollecting their attitudes, and to what extent working with such recalled attitudes causes one to make different causal inferences about attitude change. Dutch citizens who cooperated in a national survey in 1995 were approached again in 2006 and were asked how they estimated their attitudes around three important social issues – euthanasia, homosexuality and ethnic minorities – to have been in 1995. Evidence was found for the presence of implicit theories of self in the form of the well-known consistency bias and aggregate trend bias. People are likely to adjust their estimation of their previous attitudes to their current attitudes – hence to perceive stability, even though quite some objective change was found – and are more likely to report a change when it corresponds with the aggregated change in society. These findings do not put much faith in the reliability of retrospectively questioning respondents on their attitudes, when one is interested in the description of individuals. However, the aggregate of the recalled attitudes resembled the contemporaneous aggregate more closely. With great caution I conclude that recalled attitudinal data may be useful for providing descriptions of the aggregate.

Interestingly, hardly any consistent group differences were found in the accuracy of the recall. The differences I do find are irregular and small. People who are more certain about their own recall indeed perform marginally better. I have to remark here that most people indicate being quite certain about their recalled attitude – and among these people who have certainty, many individual respondents are mistaken.

The final question I aimed to answer is to what extent causal inferences about attitude change differ when using either recalled or contemporaneous attitudes. To answer this question I studied effects from salient events between 1995 and 2006 on the current attitude towards euthanasia, homosexuality and ethnic minorities, controlled for the 1995 attitude. Few significant differences were found using the recalled data or the contemporaneous data. Providing further confidence on the use of recalled data is that the effects of the events on current attitude was always in the same direction, irrespective of the use of the recalled or the contemporaneous attitudes. Comparably, hardly any significant differences were found in the effect of the recalled attitude or the contemporaneous attitude on the reported events between 1995 and 2006. Similar results were obtained in the two previous studies that dealt with causal modelling with retrospective data (Powers, Goudy & Keith, 1978; Yarrow, Campbell & Burton, 1970).

Although it has not been my primary concern, I found more evidence for effects from one's previous attitude on the experience of an event, than an event having effects on attitudes subsequently. Overall, the effects from the events were at most very modest. These findings show the importance of controlling for initial attitude when attempting to assess contact effects. Only few sociological studies dealing with the contact theory have used a panel-design.

Of course, I am aware that the present study is not the final step in the questions concerning retrospective attitudinal accounts. But given the fact that there were hardly any

studies that dealt with this question, this chapter provides many clues for future research. First, this study should be replicated for a larger sample to overcome power issues. Second, more events should be included. Third, I am interested on whether the results obtained would also apply to other attitudes. Fourth, I should experiment with the construction of the questionnaire and the impact of question wordings, order, introduction, etc. on the results, in order to find the most successful ways to measure attitudes retrospectively. Finally, I believe it would be of interest to identify characteristics of the attitudes or of respondents, to continue the search for who is better at recalling which attitudes.

Although I found strong biases in retrospective accounts, I believe the present study has shown that they can be valuable in social science research. This is important information for further data collections, given the high cost and unavailability of panel data over extended periods of time.

Chapter VI
Positive and Negative Experiences with Ethnic Minorities[12]

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the question of whether attitudinal change is invoked by personal experiences with the attitude object. The effects of intergroup contacts have been studied by a large body of social scientists, ever since the seminal work of Allport (1954). Although findings are sometimes inconsistent or contradictory, the general consensus now is that intergroup contacts promote positive evaluations of the outgroup (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000; Powers & Ellison, 1995). Many have tried to identify conditions that facilitate the positive effects of intergroup contact. Initially, four conditions were specified that would ameliorate the positive link between intergroup contact and evaluations of the outgroup with which the contact took place: members of the different groups have to be of equal status; they must have a common goal; they have to work together in order to achieve that goal; and there has to be some sort of authorisation of the contact (Allport, 1954). Currently the emphasis lies on contact itself, since the positive effects are often achieved when none of the specified conditions are met. However, the causal mechanisms between contact and positive attitudes have been understudied. With the exception of some experimental designs over short-time spans, few studies have dealt with the extent to which attitudes indeed changed as a result of newly established contacts.

Another lacuna in contact research is the content of the contact. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006, 767) claim its importance for future research, as by now 'explorations of contact theory have focused largely on positive factors'. There have been studies focusing on discrimination, or racist victimisation, and the extent to which this affects identification processes among minority members (e.g. Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). There are however strikingly few studies focusing on the possible negative consequences on majority attitudes of (negative) intergroup contact. This is surprising, as it is not hard to come up with situations or personal experiences that might make people more negative towards outgroups. If positive experiences can be generalised, negative experiences are even more likely to be generalised. Indeed, Stephan et al. (2002) showed which threats are correlated to racial attitudes of blacks and whites in the USA. This chapter takes a longitudinal approach and addresses the following main research question: *Do negative experiences with outgroup members induce negative evaluations of the group as a whole?* I use survey data on real life encounters with ethnic minority members to answer this question. Previous research was often either experimental in nature or based on cross-sectional correlations – the former sometimes lacking similarity with real-life experiences of people, the latter unable to sort out the causality between intergroup contact and outgroup attitudes. I will include negative and positive experiences with ethnic minorities that happen to some of the majority population, but which are not everyday experiences and are hard to simulate in experimental conditions.

[12]A different version of this chapter is currently under review. Co-author is Marcel Lubbers.

6.2 Expectations

Although the majority of studies dealing with Contact theory have sorted out how prejudice and negativity towards outgroups can be diminished, the possibilities of negative contact effects were already outlined early in the literature. Allport (1954) recognises prejudice as a natural condition of human societies, and real, not casual, contact as its remedy. However, he also outlined conditions under which contact would have negative consequences for outgroup evaluations. According to him, mere casual contacts in the streets or trams bring to mind each time hearsay, rumours and prejudices about 'the other' through association of ideas. The more casual contacts individuals have, the more negative evaluations are called to mind, and 'by the law of frequency' strengthen these negative images of the outgroup involved. He identified ten conditions that would lead to an increase in negative stereotyping. The factors that he reckons to invoke (ethnic) prejudice are not characteristics of the type of contact between members of different groups, but instead characteristics of the society in which the different groups are present, such as rapid social change and the presence of realistic sources of conflict between groups. Conversely, I focus on those intergroup contacts that not only lack positive conditions, but which constitute in themselves negative experiences. Forbes (1997, p.24) states that the central problem of contact theory is how to distinguish favourable from unfavourable contact. However, even when research focuses on negative consequences of contact, it is usually in terms of not meeting the conditions specified by Allport and his followers. Forbes himself addresses cultural differences between two groups as a driving force behind ethnic conflict. He plainly and rightfully argues that group conflict cannot arise in situations wherein either contact or differences between group cultures do not exist.

In many studies, frequency of interethnic contact is expected to result in positive generalisations about the outgroups (Brown, Vivian & Hewstone, 1999; Dovidio, Gaertner & Kawakami, 2003; Eller & Abrams, 2004; Wagner et al., 2006). To what extent this contact is actually evaluated positively is mostly left out. The real content of the contact – either positive of negative – remains understudied. Studies in which contact has a positive connotation use contact with ethnic minority friends (Eller & Abrams, 2004; Levin, van Laar & Sidanius, 2003; Wagner et al., 2003). Although with this sort of contact measurement a longitudinal design is even more important, the opposite of having friends, which constitutes a negative experience – say having ethnic minority foes – is hardly ever included. One of the most explicit negative encounters one can have with other individuals is becoming a victim of crime. Crime is one of the 'principal concerns commonly expressed about the presence of immigrants' (Sniderman et al., 2000, 33), and a feature through which ethnic minorities are often portrayed in the Dutch press (Lubbers, Scheepers & Wester 1998). I expect that becoming the victim of a crime perpetrated by an ethnic minority member leads to generalised prejudice towards ethnic minorities. In studies dealing with integrated threat theory, evaluations of intergroup contact are generally considered an important predictor for the relaxation

of prejudice or negative racial attitudes (Kenworthy et al., 2005: Stephan, Diaz-Loving & Duran, 2000; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Integrated threat theory proposes that four types of threat, including intergroup anxiety, cause prejudice. Several studies use measures of negative contact experiences, such as insults and harassment, and have found that these negative experiences are correlated with feelings of intergroup threat and anxiety. These feelings of threat and anxiety lead in turn to more negative evaluations of the outgroup (Stephan et al., 2002). Others have also shown that the link between contact and reduced prejudice is mediated by lessened intergroup anxiety (Voci & Hewstone, 2003). However, I have found no studies of negative contact experiences that employed longitudinal designs.

Criminologists have a tradition of investigating the consequences of victimisation on a range of attitudes and (risk-averse) behaviour. They show that the highly expected correlation between prior victimisation and consequent fears of crime is not so straightforward. Other factors, such as prejudice, contribute sometimes more to fear of victimisation (Myers & Chung, 1998). They have however not paid attention to the causal relation from prior victimisation to prejudice. Recent work showed that a lower quality of intergroup contact increases intergroup anxiety, which in turn increases prejudice and stereotypes and explicit measures of outgroup hostility (Aberson & Haag, 2007). This study also reported that people who had had more negative experiences with outgroup members expected negative experiences when interacting with them, and showed more intergroup anxiety and hostility. Being victimised by an ethnic minority member is likely to increase intergroup anxiety an thus to lead to higher levels of prejudice and negative evaluations of the ethnic group as a whole.

My first hypothesis is that being victimised by an outgroup member increases fear and rejection of the outgroup, and that *becoming a victim of a crime committed by an ethnic minority member is a form of contact that leads to more generalised prejudice towards ethnic minorities*. The ethnicity of the perpetrator is a highly visible characteristic, contrary to for instance whether or not the criminal has a job, or is a single child. The salience of the categorisation of the other as member of the outgroup plays a moderating role in the link between contact and prejudice (Islam & Hewstone, 1993). Ethnicity becomes related to criminal behaviour in the mind of the victim, so that every time she is reminded of the crime the link to ethnicity is made – following Allport's principle of strengthening the (already) negative evaluation of the ethnic outgroup. Crimes committed by ingroup members will not have the same generalised consequence on the attitude towards the ingroup, simply because the victim himself is of the same group and is therefore less likely to notice this particular characteristic as exemplary of his situation. Desforges et al. (1991) considered a three-step mechanism behind the negative connection between contact and prejudice. First, the other person must be identified as belonging to another group; second, the behaviour must be interpreted as different than expected on the basis of prejudice; third, the new attribute must be generalised to the outgroup as a whole. When considering

this model for negative experiences with ethnic minority members, it is likely to lead to an increase in intolerance: first because ethnicity is a highly visible characteristic, and second because it requires less mental effort to categorise expected, negative behaviour from an outgroup member as typical of that group than unexpected, positive behaviour. Stereotypes and prejudice are thus confirmed, leading victims to hold stronger beliefs about the innate criminality and thus undesirability of ethnic minorities. This implies that those with the most negative attitudes to start with are affected most by negative experiences, and those with already very positive attitudes the most by positive encounters. However, the scalar nature of my measurement instrument renders it impossible to test this, as neither I nor anyone else could deal with the ceiling effects.

To contrast my hypothesis about negative contact experiences, I also investigate two positive experiences that majority members can have with minority members. My questionnaire includes an item on paying a home visit to an ethnic minority member and an item on attending a mixed wedding. *I expect these positive contact experiences to change the intolerance towards ethnic minorities in a negative direction*. This second hypothesis is in line with much of the earlier research on intergroup contacts (e.g. Powers & Elison, 1995; Brown, Vivian & Hewstone, 1999; Nesdale & Todd, 2000). However, following Allport's argument of prejudice as the natural condition of human society, the effects of positive contact experiences could be expected to be more modest, since these have to counter instead of reinforce existing prejudice or hostility.

6.3 Data

Two different longitudinal datasets are employed which include both positive and negative contact experiences. The first dataset contains a panel with two measurements, in 1995 and 2006. This is a relatively small dataset, from which effectively 293 respondents can be used. Because some of the events have a low incidence, I also employ the large survey that relies on retrospective measurements, which was discussed in the previous chapter. The first study provides evidence that results based on actual attitude changes and retrospectively perceived attitude changes do not differ significantly. I therefore believe that replication of my panel study with a larger sample is both possible and of relevance to test my hypotheses.

6.4 First study: Social and Cultural Developments in the Netherlands 1995-2006.

First, I use SOCON – Social and Cultural Developments in the Netherlands – panel data. In 1995, a Dutch representative survey was conducted (Eisinga et al., 1996). In 2006 respondents were approached again and asked for their contact experiences with migrants (Jaspers & Lubbers, 2007). From the respondents who in 1995 agreed to cooperate again in future research (95%) and were traced in 2006 (70%), I reached a

response rate of 52%.

In the first study, respondents were asked in 1995 about their attitudes towards migrants and Muslims by ways of various items. Five items were repeated in the 2006 questionnaire, three of them forming a reliable scale (Ethnic minorities are a threat to Dutch culture; Muslims easily resort to violence; Muslim women with a headscarf do not adjust). Cronbach's alphas in 1995 and 2006 are .98 and .85 respectively.

I questioned the respondents in 2006 about various important events they might have experienced. This section of the questionnaire was placed a number of pages after the attitude questions. They were asked whether they had ever experienced a series of events, and if they had, at which age this had happened to them for the first time and how often during the last decade. A series of events were identified that might invoke a change in attitudes. About their experiences with ethnic minorities, I asked them whether they had ever attended a marriage between an ethnic minority member and a Dutch person; whether they had ever visited an ethnic minority member in her home; and whether they had ever been threatened by a member of an ethnic minority group. For all the events reported I determined whether they had occurred for the first time between 1995 and 2006. Events that took place prior to 1995 are expected to have influenced the 1995 attitude, not the 2006 attitude.

Some controls in the models on attitude change and event occurrence were included. A variable on whether the respondent was *female* or not and the *age* of the respondent in years in 2006 was included. I asked for the highest level of education completed in 2006, and recoded the answers to the number of years necessary for the reported level. *Education in years* ranges from six (primary education) to 20 (a completed PhD). Respondents were also asked whether they were *religious* or not. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations can be found in Appendix 6A.

Results

Auto-regression structural equation models were estimated with the program Lisrel. The current 2006 attitude was regressed on the attitude of 1995, providing the stability parameter. This model also included the controls and the negative and positive contact experiences, one by one, presented in the models 1 to 3 in Table 6.1. Due to the small N, they could not be estimated simultaneously. Effects from having had some form of contact since 1995 on the 2006 attitude and above one's 1995 attitude would be in accordance with my hypotheses that contact results in changed attitudes.

The auto-regression model shows that there is a large degree of stability in the attitude. The stability parameters are around 0.90. This refers to the stability in the distribution of the answering patterns of respondents in 1995 and 2006, not to attitude stability per se. If all respondents changed in the same direction to the same extent, the parameter would be 1. My expectation however is that one's position on the attitude toward ethnic minorities also depends on the experience of contact with outgroup members. In model 1 there is evidence for a generalisation of negative

contact; the effect of experiencing a physical threat by an ethnic minority member is 0.195. Respondents who reported being threatened by an ethnic minority member turn out to have more unfavourable attitudes towards ethnic minorities in 2006, controlled for their 1995 attitude. The panel study shows no evidence for positive contact effects. The effects of visiting an ethnic minority member (b = 0.059) or attending a mixed wedding (b= 0.112) are in the expected direction, but are not significant. Although this non-significance is partly due to the small sample, I have to conclude that the effects from positive contact are quite modest. In the previous chapter it was also shown that in particular positive contact effects need to be controlled for previous attitude, because positive contact experiences are to a large degree dependent on the individual's attitude. People with positive attitudes towards ethnic minorities are more likely to encounter minority members in positive settings. The general conclusion from the first study is that the contact effects are modest, but in the expected direction.

Table 6.1 SEM regression models for the negative attitude towards ethnic minorities in the Netherlands in 2006

	model 1		model 2		model 3	
	b	se	b	se	b	se
auto regression: 1995 attitude towards e.m.	**.871**	(.115)	**.906**	(.119)	**.897**	(.119)
age	.040	(.058)	.015	(.055)	.012	(.054)
man	.040	(.077)	.002	(.070)	.023	(.071)
educational attainment	-.027	(.062)	-.059	(.066)	-.049	(.064)
not religious	-.059	(.068)	-.058	(.066)	-.052	(.066)
threatened by e.m.	**.195**	(.087)				
visited e.m.			-.059	(.075)		
attended wedding e.m.					-.112	(.076)
Chi-square	49.96		50.08		46.97	
df	28		28		28	
RMSEA	.052		.052		.048	
N	293		293		293	

Source: SOCON panel 1995-2006

6.5 Second study: Family Survey Dutch Population 2003

The first study revealed modest negative and positive contact effects. In the previous chapter I analysed to what extent contact effects can be reconstructed with retrospective accounts of attitudes, and compared results based on actual and retrospective accounts. Although (large) biases exists in retrospective accounts, I found that the use of recalled attitudes towards ethnic minorities generally leads to valid results in causal models. In the second study such retrospective accounts are used for a larger population, to find out whether the same conclusions are reached. Here I relied on the Family Survey Dutch Population 2003 (De Graaf et al., 2003), a national stratified sample of the Dutch population. The data were collected from October 2003 through January 2004. The net response of this survey is 52.6 percent, which resulted in 2,166 respondents.

To reconstruct the causal process of attitude change towards ethnic minorities as a result of personal experiences with members of these groups, I collected life histories on people's general approval or disapproval rate, as well as their personal encounters with ethnic minority members. The dependent variable is the disapproval rate of the presence of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands, measured on a five-point scale. I asked respondents their current opinion, as well as their opinions at ages 18, 30 and 50, if applicable. First I asked: *We present you with a few issues on which opinions diverge. How do you feel about ...?* The next question was also very general, to facilitate reconstruction of one's previous attitude: *People can change their opinions with age. Could you estimate your opinion on the abovementioned issues when you were 18, 30 and 50 years old?* Respondents were thus asked for their current general approval or disapproval rate of ethnic minorities, and for their approval or disapproval of ethnic minorities when they were 18, 30 and 50 years old. The oldest in the sample have four measurement points, whereas 18-year-olds have only one.

Furthermore, respondents' gender, centred age, educational attainment and church membership were included in the models. Respondents were presented with a list of various important events they might have experienced. This section of the questionnaire was placed a number of pages after the current and recall attitude questions. Respondents were asked whether they had ever experienced a series of events, and if they had, at which age this had happened to them for the first time and how often during the last decade. With respect to personal experiences with ethnic minority members, the personal experiences were identical to those in study 1 in this chapter: being threatened by an ethnic minority member, paying a home visit to an ethnic minority and attending a mixed wedding. All variables, with the exception of gender, are modelled at the occasion level. This means that they can vary within an individual between measurement occasions. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations can be found in Appendix 6B.

Table 6.2 Cross tabulations for previous and next attitude towards the presence of ethnic minority members in the Netherlands

		attitude towards presence of ethnic minorities in Netherlands					**Total**
		Very positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative	
previous attitude towards ethnic minorities	Very positive	96	46	45	9	1	**197**
		48.7%	23.4%	22.8%	4.6%	.5%	**100.0%**
	Positive	41	277	231	47	4	**600**
		6.8%	46.2%	38.5%	7.8%	.7%	**100.0%**
	Neutral	28	172	1697	311	20	**2228**
		1.3%	7.7%	76.2%	14.0%	.9%	**100.0%**
	Negative	7	19	163	816	30	**1035**
		.7%	1.8%	15.7%	78.8%	2.9%	**100.0%**
	Very negative	1	5	12	40	87	**145**
		.7%	3.4%	8.3%	27.6%	60.0%	**100.0%**
Total		**137**	**519**	**2148**	**1223**	**142**	**4205**
		4.1%	**12.3%**	**51.1%**	**29.1%**	**3.4%**	**100.0%**

Source: Family Survey Dutch Population 2003

Table 6.2 shows the amount of change between every two consecutive attitudes towards the presence of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. The table shows 4205 previous-next attitude combinations. This is lower than the total number of measurements in the data, because the attitude at age 18 can never be the next attitude The majority of people have not changed their attitudes over consecutive years, although a considerable number has. Pearson correlation between previous and next attitudes is .668. There is change both in positive and negative direction.

Results

Study 2 employs hierarchical linear growth curve models.[13] These models are suited for the recalled data in this chapter, because they can model change within individuals and are flexible in terms of data structure. They can deal with incomplete measurement occasions as well as with differences in the spacing between measurement occasions (Snijders & Bosker, 1999). To estimate the coefficients two levels are modelled, wherein the various measurement occasions (level 1) are nested within individuals (level 2). After deletion of respondents with missing scores on the dependent variables, the analyses are performed with 6354 occasions within 2115 respondents. The lowest number of measurements for one respondent is 1, the highest number of measurements possible is 4. The first model is the so-called empty model, with only a constant set randomly over both between individuals and within individuals, to estimate variances at the two levels. The variance at level two (Ω = 0,420) is larger than the variance at level one (Ω = 0,291). This means that more differences are found in disapproval between individuals than within individuals. Next, in growth curve applications a time metric is introduced in the model, to estimate the development over time. Raudenbush and Bryk (2002) advise modelling the growth linearly, when there are only three or four measurements per individual, and using polynomials only for data with more lower-level entities. For this reason the second model includes age of the respondent, set randomly over individuals. The zero value of the age variable represents the mean value, so that the intercept provides the initial value for respondents of mean age. The introduction provides two new variance components, both significant. The trajectories respondents take (modelled linearly) differ significantly between respondents. People show a trend towards a little less intolerance towards ethnic minorities over the life course. However, a cohort effect might be interfering, as it is only people who were older in 2003, the year of data collection, that have measurements at later ages.

The aim of this chapter is not to determine whether there is some age or some cohort effect, but to establish whether specific personal experiences cause attitude change. Within-individuals changes in attitude towards ethnic minorities do occur as the variance component at the occasion level becomes smaller but remains significant. Changes in the disapproval rate of the presence of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands are partly related to the controls included in model 3. Men are more negative towards the presence of ethnic minorities (b = 0,134). The effect of education is as expected (b = 0,039).

[13] I also estimated a model very similar to that of study 1, predicting next disapproval rate with previous disapproval rate and including control variables and personal experiences. If parameters were significant, controlled for previous disapproval rate, this meant they affect the change between the two measurements. Very similar results were obtained, with different effect sizes yet identical parameter direction and significance.

Table 6.3 Multilevel growth curve models for the attitude towards the presence of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands

	model 1		model 2		model 3		model 4	
intercept	2.886		2.884		2.940		2.984	
predictors								
age			**-.004**	(.001)	**-.013** -2	(.007) -2	**-.015** -2	(.007) -2
man					**.148**	(.030)	**.134**	(.030)
educational attainment					**-.039**	(.004)	**-.038**	(.004)
religious					**.086**	(.027)	**.076**	(.026)
threatened by e.m.							**.212**	(.038)
first visit to e.m.							**-.257**	(.034)
attended wedding e.m.							**-.060**	(.036)
variance components								
individuals	**.420**	(.016)	**.432**	(.016)	**.394**	(.015)	**.373**	(.014)
age - individuals			**-.001**	(.004) -2	**-.002**	(.004) -2	**-.002**	(.004) -2
age			**.002** -2	(.003) -3	**-.003** -2	(.003) -3	**-.003** -2	(.003) -3
occasions	**.291**	(.006)	**.234**	(.006)	**.237**	(.006)	**.237**	(.006)
-2 loglikelihood	13714.050		13518.930		13388.430		13303.49	
delta df			3		3		3	
model improvement			195.120		130.500		84.94	
N	6354		6354		6354		6354	

Source: Dutch Family Survey 2003. Bold numbers indicate significance. Standard errors in parentheses.

A higher education decreases disapproval of the presence of ethnic minorities. Religious respondents are slightly more opposed to the presence of ethnic minorities. In the fourth model, the experience of being threatened by an ethnic minority member, of visiting an ethnic minority member in her house and of attending a mixed wedding are included as variables at the occasion level. The experience of any of the events is thus only expected to affect the level of disapproval at the next measurement occasion. The experience of being threatened by a member of an ethnic minority group affects the disapproval rate of the presence of ethnic minorities positively (b= 0,212). Paying a first-time visit to an ethnic minority member has a negative effect on the disapproval of ethnic minorities (b= 0,257). Two of the hypotheses on the consequences of are corroborated, but the effect of attending a mixed wedding is not significant. It is possible that those who attend a mixed wedding are already part of a selective group with very positive attitudes. Again, the effect is in the expected direction (b = 0,060). In general, the results of study 2 are similar to those of study 1, although the effects are more pronounced in the second study. Power issues might explain the differences.

6.6 Summary and discussion

By evaluating the effects of negative experiences with ethnic minorities on the majority's attitude towards minority groups with two longitudinal designs, I have corroborated my hypothesis derived from Contact theory. Having a negative contact experience with a member of an ethnic minority group leads majority members to stronger negative evaluations of the outgroup. Following suggestions from Pettigrew and Tropp to pay attention to negative contact experiences, I show that these may play an important role in hampering the improvement of interethnic relations. In many Western European societies, more intergroup contact between ethnic groups than ever is taking place, and some of these encounters are bound to be of the negative kind. Although the incidence of the studied negative experiences is not so large (but neither are the positive contacts), I have no way of knowing yet whether negative experiences are outnumbered by positive experiences. It is plausible that negative experiences are more often shared in networks, and thus likely to have negative consequential effects outside the victim as well. I think that such a network approach would be an important road for future research to study consequences of negative encounters. Furthermore, the effects of negative encounters appear to affect negative evaluations more easily, as they reinforce existing prejudice.

With both a panel study and a retrospective design I found comparable contact effects. In general, effects are quite modest though. Strong relations between – in particular positive – contact and attitudes turned out to be caused by selection processes. People with more favourable attitudes are more likely to have positive encounters and establish interethnic contacts. Nevertheless my study, in which it was possible to control for the causality problem central to Contact theory, shows that

contact has its influence on people's attitudes. As always with longitudinal data, it could be that all changes in the level of disapproval of the presence of ethnic minorities took place prior to personal experiences. This could be the case especially with respect to attending a wedding. However, with respect to being threatened by a member of a minority group this is less likely. This could all be the case even if the measurement occasions took place extremely close in time, but my spacing of measurement occasions is relatively large and the results rely on recalled data. The previous chapter demonstrated that these recalled data can be used for causal modelling, but some caution is recommended. When applying the mechanisms behind the findings in this chapter to for instance forced contacts in schools and at the workplace, it is apparent that attention should paid to the quality of the contact. Just placing people together will result in both positive and negative experiences, allowing people to stress that experience that confirms one's initial attitude.

For future research I would encourage more longitudinal studies that focus on the consequences of negative intergroup contacts. Future questions could also focus on the circumstances that modify the effects of negative experiences, or on the consequences of having both positive and negative experiences with outgroup members on attitudes towards members of these groups.

Chapter VII
Personal Experiences with Homosexuals and Timing over the Life Course[14]

7.1 Introduction

The Netherlands was the first country in the world to legalise gay marriages in 2001. The first gay wedding ever, of two women in Amsterdam, drew attention from all over the world but little resistance from within the country, although not all political parties had agreed on the implementation of gay marriage. It was the Social Democrats and the Liberals that passed it, whereas the Christian parties, both the Christian Democrats and the stricter Protestants, objected in vain. Recently, in a speech for Indonesian students on the workings of democracy, the Dutch prime minister revealed that he had voted against the bill on gay marriage (Volkskrant, 2006). Although not everybody agreed on the introduction of gay marriage, most of the Dutch population does not object to homosexuality per se. Internationally, the Netherlands is known for its unusually tolerant attitude towards homosexuals. In a comparative study of 29 developed nations, the Netherlands was by far the most approving of homosexual relationships (Kelley, 2001).

Whether attitudes are stable traits of individuals is intensely debated (Alwin & Krosnick, 1991; Glenn, 1980; Miller & Sears, 1986; Tallichet & Willits, 1986; Visser & Krosnick, 1998). One perspective is that of persistence of attitudes. After attitude formation during socialisation, attitudes remain stable over the adult life span, possibly as part of environmental continuity over the life span. Others argue that people are always at risk of changing their attitudes. This chapter examines the life-span development of an attitude that I know has seen a lot of change: the attitude towards homosexuality in the Netherlands, and one of the possible causes of this change. The following two issues are addressed: (1) the effect of personal experiences with homosexuals, and (2) the timing over the life course of these experiences.

No survey data on attitudes towards homosexuals in the Netherlands exist prior to 1968. Nevertheless, it is highly likely that attitudes were much more negative in earlier decades. Opposition to homosexual practice as such declined rapidly, as was shown in chapters 3 and 4. The inevitable conclusion of even just glancing at these chapters is that Dutch opposition to homosexual lifestyles has rapidly decreased.

Some of the observed macro change can be interpreted in terms of the macro composition of society. Younger individuals are on average less religious and higher educated, both traits which are associated with more tolerance towards gay men and lesbians. However, the shift in sexual tolerance is too large to be solely interpreted in terms of this changing composition. Similar compositional changes have also taken place in other Western societies, without such a revolution in attitudes towards homosexuality. Part of the shift in sexual tolerance in the Netherlands is related to simultaneous processes of individualisation and secularisation, which have led to more

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sexual permissiveness on a number of issues, such as premarital sex and contraceptives (Kraaykamp, 2002). The Netherlands is generally considered to have become one of the most liberal countries in the least amount of time on various sexuality issues (NRC, 1991).

Yet, there is another possible reason for a change in attitudes towards homosexuals that has mostly been ignored. This cause of attitude change would be a very personal experience: having contact with gay men or lesbians. This is the central issue addressed in the present chapter. As gay men and lesbians increasingly came out in public, the chances for ordinary citizens to become acquainted with a homosexual man or woman increased. The homosexual pressure group in the Netherlands, COC, was particularly successful in promoting the lifestyles of gay men and lesbians, compared to similar institutions in other countries (Warmerdam & Koenders, 1987). The processes of more favourable public attitudes towards lesbians and gay men and an increase in lesbians and gay men openly acknowledging their sexual identity are undoubtedly intertwined. As Dutch attitudes became more liberal, more lesbians and gay men would have felt secure in expressing their sexuality. Previous studies found that having contact with lesbians or gay men accounted for approximately 5 percent of variance in attitudes towards gay men, controlled for other relevant predictors (Herek & Glunt, 1993). By addressing the long-time impact of contact with homosexuals in intimate circles with the present research, I am able to make a first step towards exploring this alternative explanation for attitude change towards homosexuality in Dutch society.

Negative attitudes towards outgroups

Negative attitudes towards groups other than one's own are a common phenomenon over time and place. Sumner (1906) is one of the first to systematically describe many ethnic groups with negative stereotypes about each other. Stereotypes about members of so-called outgroups are one of a large number of useful heuristics in daily life, that allow us to create order in a complex environment. It is a psychological need to have a positive self-image, which contains a positive image of the groups one belongs to. During their formative years, individuals decide on which groups they are a member of and which they aren't. When these classifications of others are used to compare the others to the ingroup and the former are judged inferior, intolerance towards others develops. The comparison between ingroups and outgroups is often decided in favour of one's own group. This process was described in Social Identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In their classic study, the minimal group experiment, Tajfel and Turner showed that it does not take much to create an ingroup and outgroup. Random distribution of subjects over two different groups proved sufficient to invoke favourable ingroup behaviour and the willingness to punish members of the other group. Stereotypes of and negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians have often been researched by social psychologists and sociologists (Hajek & Giles,2005; Herek, 2002; Herek, 1993; Kunkel & Temple, 1992; Loftus, 2001; Ohlander, Batalova & Treas,

2005). Psychologists tend to focus on the effects of contact with homosexuals on the change in attitudes towards this group, whereas sociologists emphasise structural characteristics such as religious denomination and educational attainment as predictors of attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. This chapter will investigate these two perspectives simultaneously.

7.2 Expectations

The Contact Hypothesis

One of the central concepts in intergroup relations is the idea that contact between members of different groups may ameliorate attitudes towards each other. Allport (1954) was the first to systematically describe how contact with outgroup members can change negative attitudes towards these groups, when certain conditions are met. For many different outgroups, such as ethnic groups (Forbes, 1997), bisexuals (Herek, 2002), and lesbians and gay men (Anderssen, 2002; Lemm, 2006; Mohipp & Morry, 2004; Sakalli & Ugurlu, 2002), research has shown that contact indeed reduces negative attitudes towards the outgroup. A recent meta-analysis of the research on contact with outgroups concludes that this connection has been convincingly demonstrated by now (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Pettigrew and Tropp reason that the process underlying the positive effect of contact on attitudes towards outgroups involves the tendency of familiarity to breed liking. I propose that an outgroup member entering the family indicates the highest possible level of familiarity. Other research also indicates that the importance attached to intergroup contact has an additional influence on the reduction of outgroup prejudice above and beyond the quality and level of the contact (Van Dick et al., 2004). Van Dick and colleagues find that the perceived importance of the contact mediates the effects of proximal contact. Contact with family and friends can safely be considered a form of contact that most people will attach importance to.

There have been a number of suggestions on the mechanisms operating behind the negative contact-intolerance link. One of these is the idea of the development of a common group identity. Social categorisation processes in which people are identified as either belonging to the same group(s) or to an outgroup affect attitudes towards others. If somehow people belonging to different groups succeed in creating a common ingroup identity while maintaining their previous original group identities to some extent, negative evaluations of each other are reduced (Dovidio, Gaertner & Kawakami, 2003). Family and friends are for many individuals highly important ingroups that cannot easily be shed. When members of outgroups enter the intimate circle of family and friends and become part of these ingroups, negative attitudes towards the outgroup they represent will diminish. I will focus on contacts with homosexuals within the intimate circle of friends and family. The first hypothesis reads: *Contact with gay men and lesbians within the circle of friends and family decreases intolerance towards homosexuality.*

There are two general research designs used for testing the contact hypothesis. In

the experimental design, subjects are confronted with gay men or lesbians, and attitudes towards homosexuals are measured afterwards and compared with the measurement prior to contact. This study design has two fundamental weaknesses, when one is interested in the possibility of long-lasting social impacts of encounters with members of specific outgroups, as I am. The first weakness is that the subjects are interviewed very shortly after the experiment took place, with a maximum of two years (Anderssen, 2002). It is assumed that these changes will last to some extent, but this is not tested. A common feature of these studies is that the broader context wherein the subjects are studied typically does not change during the study. For instance, college students are interviewed during their first and second year. A second flaw is the samples of subjects generally used in these types of studies. They consist merely of college students, who are in many and possibly very significant ways different from the general public. They have a higher education, which is known to cause more tolerant views of outgroups (Ohlander, Batalova & Treas, 2005). They are also in an age group that is known for its susceptibility to attitude change (Alwin, Cohen & Newcomb, 1991; Alwin & McCammon, 2003; Visser & Krosnick, 1998).

In the survey design, respondents are questioned both on their attitudes towards homosexuals and the amount of contact they have with lesbians and gay men. The correlation between these two is considered support for the contact hypothesis. Herek (2002) shows in a representative telephone survey in the United States that those who have had prior contact with lesbians or gay men, as either a friend or relative, are less likely to have negative attitudes towards bisexuals. In his design it is impossible to determine whether it is the contact with an outgroup member which decreases a negative attitude or whether those who have more positive attitudes towards bisexuals in the first place are more likely to move in circles where the chances of having contact with openly gay men or lesbians is greatest. This causality mix-up is the third problem in research on attitudinal change towards outgroups. There are some longitudinal studies that address the relation between contact and attitudes (Levin, van Laar & Sidanius, 2003), but these are rare and often suffer from selective sampling. Some researchers have therefore modelled bidirectional causal relations within a Structural Equation Modelling context (Wagner et al., 2003), but they advise a longitudinal design to conduct a more severe test of the contact hypothesis. This chapter sets out to overcome the three shortcomings of the previous research: a short-term effects testing; a selective subject sample; and a causality paradox, by employing an innovative strategy. I will make use of a retrospective questionnaire among a representative sample of Dutch citizens in 2003.

Structural predictors

Previous research has shown that intolerance towards gay men and lesbians is not equally distributed over all groups in society. Individual religiousness influences attitude towards homosexuality both worldwide and in the Netherlands (Andersen & Fetner, 2008b) Kelley 2001; Van de Meerendonk & Scheepers, 2004). Both the current

denomination and the level of church attendance of the individual have a positive influence on intolerance towards homosexuality. I expect an additional influence from leaving the church. The Netherlands has seen a large decline in church membership over the course of the 20th century. I expect those who have just left their church to have more tolerant views on homosexuality than people who are still church members, but less tolerant views than those who never belonged to a church, or left the church a longer time ago.

Education is considered to be an important factor in embracing tolerant worldviews, including tolerance towards homosexuals (Persell, Green & Gurevich, 2001). Educational attainment is considered to represent conceptual complexity and sophistication of the reasoning process, necessary for developing the willingness and ability to extend civil liberties to non-conformist groups (Bobo & Licari, 1989). Men more often than women have negative attitudes towards homosexuals (Plummer, 2001). Kelley (2001) finds the same difference between men and women. It has been suggested that this difference could be explained by misogyny. Very masculine men would feel threatened by all forms of behaviour considered feminine, stemming either from women or homosexual men (Parrott, Adams & Zeichner, 2002). The difference between men and women in attitudes towards homosexuals is more pronounced where it concerns gay men, and less pronounced when it comes to lesbians (Kite & Whitley Jr., 1996). There is also the possibility to be considered that women in general have more contact with gay men and lesbians, and are therefore less intolerant towards these groups. The above leads to the expectation that *Religious respondents; respondents that attend church more often; respondents that were once members of a church; the lower educate;d and men are more intolerant towards homosexuality than non-religious respondents; respondent that attend church less often; respondents that were never church members; the higher educated; and women.*

Finally, I turn to the expectation regarding age. Although it is sometimes suggested that the elderly turn more conservative, there is no apparent reason why the process of ageing as such would increase intolerance towards homosexuality. Rather, what I propose to test is whether the elderly are as susceptible to attitude change as the young. There is a large body of literature on the stability of attitudes that suggest that especially younger individuals are at risk for a change in attitudes due to some external circumstance (Evans, 2002; Visser & Krosnick, 1998). Although there is some evidence that the stability of attitudes towards homosexuality is minimal, and that the elderly can be affected by periodical circumstances as well (Andersen & Fetner, 2008a). I do not expect that the elderly are unable to experience a change in attitudes towards homosexuality, the evidence thus far suggests that attitudes are harder to alter once they are crystallised. The corresponding hypothesis reads: *The effect of personal experiences with homosexuals on subsequent intolerance towards homosexuality is larger for younger respondents.*

7.3 Data

This study uses the Family Survey Dutch Population 2003 (De Graaf et al., 2003), a national stratified sample of the Dutch population. The data were collected from October 2003 through January 2004. Single, divorced or widowed respondents were only included when they lived at an address with an even number. Married and cohabitating individuals were always selected. Partners are included in the data, if they were willing to cooperate. Married and cohabitating respondents are overrepresented due to the sampling procedure. Individuals living with a same sex partner are excluded from the analyses.

Dependent variable

My dependent variable is the disapproval rate of homosexuality, measured on a five-point scale. I asked respondents their current opinion, as well as their opinions at the ages 18, 30 and 50, if applicable. *First, they were asked: We present you a few issues on which opinions diverge. How do you feel about ...?* The next question was also very general: *People can change their opinions with age. Could you estimate your opinion on the abovementioned issues when you were 18, 30 and 50 years old?* Respondents were thus asked for their current general approval or disapproval rate of homosexuals, and for their approval or disapproval of homosexuals when they were 18, 30 and 50 years old. The oldest in the sample have four measurement points, whereas 18-year-olds have only one. The wording of the question is very general, to make the recalling of previous attitudes as easy as possible. Moreover, respondents were provided with the opportunity to state that they could not recall their attitude because homosexuality was not openly discussed when they were younger. Seven percent of the respondents indicate that they had never heard of homosexuals at age 18. These are mostly older respondents. The percentages rapidly decline with each occasion. Only 1.6 percent of respondents replied that they do not know their attitude on the second occasion, at age 30; a mere .4 percent could not report their attitude on occasion 3, at age 50; and none of the respondents chose to answer that they had never heard of homosexuality at present.

The sample is broken down into different age groups, to show the mean attitude towards homosexuals for these groups separately. Table7.1 presents the mean score on the disapproval scale of homosexuals per age group per measurement occasion. A respondent aged 43 has three occasions, at ages 18, 30 and 43. A respondent aged 26 has only two points of measurement; ages 18 and 26. The first column of Table7.1 shows the average score for 18-year-olds. Respondents who were recently 18 years of age are more approving at this age than respondents who were 18 years old a longer time ago. With this data it is impossible to determine whether this is due to period or birth cohorts effects. The last measurement in each row – indicated by a box in Table7.1 – is the current attitude of that age group. The middle-aged report the least negative attitude towards homosexuality. Respondents over 55 and under 25 are slightly more

disapproving. Table 7.1 shows of course the recalled levels of disapproval of the respondents, which is not necessarily an adequate description of the actual aggregate developments in homosexual intolerance. However, this table shows the data as they are being employed in the analysis. For a discussion on the validity of using recalled attitudes for statistical modelling, I refer back to Chapter 5.

Table7.1 Mean scores on the disapproval rate of homosexuality, range 1 (very approving) to 5 (very disapproving), per age group (N varies per cell)

	Occasion			
Age group	1	2	3	4
18-24	2.92	2.80		
25-29	2.98	2.65		
30-34	2.95	2.53	2.52	
35-39	3.24	2.63	2.61	
40-44	3.06	2.60	2.53	
45-49	3.11	2.63	2.55	
50-54	3.17	2.71	2.50	2.58
55-59	3.35	2.98	2.77	2.78
60-64	3.66	3.14	2.80	2.82
65-79	3.73	3.37	3.01	3.03

Source: Dutch Family Survey 2003

Events

Respondents were asked whether they had ever experienced the coming out of a friend or relative. The question read: *Below we list a number of important or moving experiences. Could you indicate whether or not you ever experienced them? And if you did, at what age did this happen to you for the first time?* The coming out of a friend or of a relative were included in the list of experiences. Table 7.2 shows that a significant proportion of respondents experienced the coming out of a friend or relative prior to each of the measurement occasions. These experiences occur all over the life course, although less often over the age of 50. For the older respondents in the sample, Table 7.2 shows that they had few exposures to homosexuals among their friends and relatives during their youth or young adolescence. This is hardly surprising, as homosexuals in most cases did not openly acknowledge their sexuality until the late 1960s. Another result found in Table 7.2 is that, apart from those over 65, all age groups report having a gay friend or relative in at least one-third of the cases.

Table 7.2 Distribution of experiencing gay friend or relative over the life course, per age group.

			Wave					
			1	2	3	4	total	% of total
Age	18-24	N=114	28	12			40	35.1
	25-29	N=200	34	36			70	35.0
	30-34	N=229	32	55	2		89	38.9
	35-39	N=295	42	69	14		125	42.4
	40-44	N=278	41	48	24		113	40.6
	45-49	N=251	26	51	33		110	43.8
	50-54	N=176	11	30	15	1	57	32.4
	55-59	N=210	7	30	25	5	67	31.9
	60-64	N=154	4	11	24	11	50	32.5
	65-79	N=178	3	4	16	11	34	19.1
	total	2085	228	346	153	28	755	36.2

Source: Dutch Family Survey 2003

Data structure in the analysis

To reconstruct the causal process of attitude change towards homosexuals as a result of personal experiences with lesbians and gay men, life histories of individuals on the general approval or disapproval rate of homosexuals were collected, as well as their first-time experiences with the coming out of gay or lesbian friends or relatives. This approach can not only solve the causality issue of the relation between intolerance towards certain groups and personal contact with members of these groups, it also allows to take into account the timing and sequencing over the life course. One of the important insights in life course research is that the various trajectories of individual's lives are interconnected (Scott & Alwin 1998). Not only does it matter that things happen to someone, it also matters *when* these events occur. The design allows me to take some of these other trajectories into consideration, such as the accumulation of schooling, or religious trajectories over the life course, when looking at the personal experiences that might trigger attitude change towards gay men and lesbians. Most of all, the question can be answered of whether these personal experiences affect individuals of all ages to the same extent.

Multi-level growth curve models are employed to answer the two research questions: the effects of experiencing the coming out of a friend or relative on intolerance towards homosexuality, and the timing over the life course of these experiences. The data structure consists of two levels, with the various measurement occasions (level 1) nested within individuals (level 2). After the deletion of respondents

with missing scores on the dependent variables, the analysis is conducted on 6533 occasions within 2085 respondents. It is important to realise that not only the younger respondents have missing data on the latter measurements, but some of the older respondents have missing data on the attitude towards homosexuality at age 18, when they reported that they had never heard of it at that time.

Independent variables

Gender is coded 1 for men. The variable *birth year* is included as a z-score. *Age* is measured in years, and centred in the models. *Educational attainment* is measured on a scale from 0 for those who did not complete primary school to 10 for those who received a post-doctoral education. *Religious* is coded as a dummy variable, as all prevalent religions in the Netherlands tend to have negative stances towards homosexuality, and I am not specifically interested in the differences between denominations (Nugent & Gramick, 1989). Snijders and Bosker (1999) advise not to include too many parameters in the modelling. The *religious* category receives the score 1. Another dummy was constructed to indicate whether respondents *became disaffiliated*. Including both these dummy variables into the models means that the reference category is the group of respondents that was never religious up to this point of their lives. *Church attendance* was measured on a five-point scale, ranging from (almost) never to more than once a week. The scale was recoded to reflect annual visits to church, ranging from 0 to 78. For the analysis, all independent variables were recoded in such a manner that 0 is the minimum score, except for age, where 0 represents the mean age.

Table 7.3 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables in the analysis. The number of cases is 6533, as the descriptive statistics are calculated over the total number of occasions, which exceeds the total number of respondents. Independent variables have values *per occasion*, rather than *per respondent,* because of the data structure. Respondents have the same value on the variables *gender* and *birth year* over all occasions, so these are level-2 variables. But respondents differ in for instance ages between occasions. *Age, educational attainment, religiousness* and *church attendance* have different values for each of the occasions. *Became disaffiliated, coming out of a relative* and *coming out of a friend* received the score '1' on a dummy variable only if the event took place between the current occasion and the previous one. For instance, a 57-year-old experienced the coming out of a friend at age 36. For occasion 2 (at age 30), this respondent receives a zero score on *coming out of a friend*, as he has not yet experienced the event; for occasion 3 (at age 50), the respondent receives the score of experiencing the coming out of a friend, as the event took place between the two occasions. For occasion 4 (at age 57), the respondent again receives a zero score, as the event took place between prior measurements and is supposed to be accounted for in the growth curve already.

Table 7.3 Descriptives for independent variables, over occasions (N=6533)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Man	.00	1.00	.50	.500
Year of birth	1924.00	1985.00	1956.54	12.87
Age centered	-14.78	46.22	.38	14.12
Educational attainment	.00	10.00	4.22	2.70
Coming out relative	.00	1.00	.06	.23
Coming out friend	.00	1.00	.08	.26
Religious	.00	1.00	.49	.50
Church attendance	.00	78.00	15.66	25.57
Became disaffiliated	.00	1.00	.08	.27

Source: Dutch Family Survey 2003

7.4 Results

Table 7.4 displays the results of the hierarchical linear growth curve models. Model 1 is the empty model, with only a constant set randomly both between individuals and within individuals, and used to estimate the variances at the different levels. The variance on level 2 ($\Omega = 0.693$) is much larger than the level-1 variance ($\Omega = 0.306$). This means that there is more variation between individuals than within individuals in disapproval of homosexuality. This is not surprising, as one would expect to find a reasonable degree of constancy in disapproval over the life course, consistent with the persistency perspective on attitudes and the consistency bias that was identified in Chapter 5.

Model 2 includes the centred age variable with a random slope. This coefficient can be interpreted as the development of disapproval of homosexuality over the life course. Older respondents (i.e. occasions at which the age is higher) show less disapproval of homosexuality. The model fit improves considerably when this term is included as predictor. The residual variance within individuals is substantially lowered, whereas between-individual variance increases. However, only respondents born before 1973 have 3 or 4 occasions, at the higher ages. These occasions thus only take place since the 1970s, whereas occasions 1 take place from the 1940s onwards. Part of this development could be due to a period effect, therefore birth year is included in the next model as a control.

Model 3 incorporates structural control variables. The variance between individuals is partly explained by these characteristics. The negative effect of age is smaller, once controlled for year of birth of the respondents. Still, over the life course, people grow less disapproving of homosexuality. At the mean age, younger cohorts are on average less intolerant of homosexuality than earlier-born cohorts. Men are more opposed to homosexuality (b= 0.331), a common finding in the literature. A higher education leads to lower levels of disapproval (b= 0.049). As expected, respondents who were never religious are the least intolerant towards homosexuals, respondents who recently became disaffiliated from a church are significantly more opposed to homosexuality (b= 0.117), and the strongest opposition comes from those respondents who still consider themselves religious (b= 0.309).

The fourth model includes having personal experiences with homosexual friends or relatives. Both the experience of the coming out of a friend (b= 0.141) and of a relative (b= 0.081) significantly lower the disapproval rate of respondents towards homosexuality. The fit of the model hardly improves when these two variables are added. The personal experiences, although significant, have a relatively small influence on homosexual intolerance. Other structural characteristics, such as educational attainment, are able to explain much more. As was shown in Chapters 3 and 4, a large part of the shift towards less intolerance towards homosexuals in the Netherlands can be explained by the changing composition of successive cohorts in religiousness and educational attainment.

The effects of individual characteristics hardly change when contact is added to the model, suggesting that experiencing a coming out among your family and friends is not related to these characteristics. This also means that the more positive attitude of women towards homosexuals – one of the most repeated findings in the literature on attitudes towards lesbians and gay men – is not explained by them having more personal experiences with homosexuals.

Model 5 includes interaction terms, to test whether younger respondents are indeed more susceptible to attitude change, as hypothesised by researchers on attitude stability over the life course (e.g. Visser & Krosnick, 1998). When it comes to experiencing the coming out of a relative, there is no difference between respondents of different ages. Older respondents are however less likely to change their attitudes towards homosexuality when they experience the coming out of a friend than younger respondents. This finding suggests that younger individuals are more vulnerable to attitude change, as many scholars have argued. But when the event is important enough, within the family for instance, older adults appear to be just as likely to change their attitudes towards homosexuality.

Table7.4: Multilevel growth curve models for the disapproval of homosexuals

	model 1		model 2		model 3		model 4		model 5	
intercept	1.840		1.808		1.654		1.664		1.666	
predictors										
age			**-.019**	(.007) $^{-2}$	**-.012**	(.008) $^{-2}$	**-.012**	(.008) $^{-2}$	**-.013**	(.008) $^{-2}$
birth cohort					**-.131**	(.018)	**-.129**	(.018)	**-.127**	(.018)
man					**.331**	(.035)	**.329**	(.035)	**.329**	(.035)
education					**-.049**	(.004)	**-.047**	(.004)	**-.047**	(.004)
religious					**.309**	(.032)	**.309**	(.032)	**.309**	(.032)
church attendance					**.005**	(.005) $^{-2}$	**.005**	(.005) $^{-2}$	**.005**	(.005) $^{-2}$
disaffiliation					**.117**	(.026)	**.119**	(.026)	**.119**	(.026)
coming out friend							**-.141**	(.023)	**-.125**	(.024)
coming out relative							**-.081**	(.027)	**-.079**	(.027)
interaction terms										
friend*age									**.006**	(.002)
relative*age									NS	
variance components										
individuals	**.693**	(.024)	**.779**	(.026)	**.586**	(.020)	**.578**	(.020)	**.577**	(.020)
age - individuals			.046 $^{-3}$	(.006) $^{-2}$	**-.014** $^{-2}$	(.005) $^{-2}$	**-.012** $^{-2}$	(.005) $^{-2}$	**-.012** $^{-2}$	(.005) $^{-2}$
age			**.004** $^{-2}$	(.003) $^{-3}$	**.004** $^{-2}$	(.003) $^{-3}$	**.004** $^{-2}$	(.003) $^{-3}$	**.004** $^{-2}$	(.003) $^{-3}$
occasions	**.306**	(.007)	**.154**	(.004)	**.149**	(.004)	**.148**	(.004)	**.148**	(.004)
-2 loglikelihood	15190.06		13752.390		13080.020		13028.680		13020.540	
delta df			3		6		2		1	
fit improvement			1437.670		672.370		51.340		8.140	
N	6533		6533		6533		6533		6533	

Source: Dutch Family Survey 2003. Bold numbers indicate significance. Standard errors in parentheses. NS = non significant.

7.5 Summary and discussion

This chapter started with two research subjects: (1) the effects of experiences with gay friends and relatives, and (2) the timing of these events over the life course. I have established that attitudes towards homosexuality become more positive with age, a finding that does not support the common-sense idea that the experience of ageing makes people more conservative. I found that having contact with a gay man or a lesbian within the private domain decreases a negative attitude towards homosexuality. As the number of openly gay men and women in the Netherlands increased, this contact may offer a partial explanation of the rapid shift towards less homosexual intolerance in the Netherlands. The effects appeared to be rather small compared to other predictors such as church attendance though. Nevertheless, I would like to encourage more research into the long-lasting influence of contact with homosexuals in the private domain, especially since I have only been able to establish individual-level changes and not changes in the aggregate attitudes of the Dutch over time towards homosexuality as a result of increased personal experiences with gay men and lesbians.

The contact hypothesis, as posed by the psychologists and sociologists who study attitudes towards homosexuals, received support from this study. However, to put the contact hypothesis fully to the test, a prospective replication of my study is advisable. For one, I have shown that in the Netherlands at least one-third of the population experiences a coming out at one point over the life course, a number that could justify a prospective design with a representative sample. This design could also facilitate the search for specific groups more susceptible to attitude change than others. In this chapter, the younger respondents were identified as more likely to change their attitudes, yet older individuals turned out to be just as likely to change their attitude towards homosexuality in the case of a coming out of a relative. Middle-aged or elderly adults might be more reluctant to change attitudes held over a lifetime, but when experiencing something they probably consider very important, they are able to change their attitudes as well. The stability of older respondents' attitudes is merely a relative stability.

Chapter VIII
Conclusions

The central research question of this book was how change in intolerance towards euthanasia, homosexuality and the presence of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands can be explained. In the first chapter I argued that in order to understand these changes one has to look at parental socialisation, period and cohort effects, and individual changes. In six empirical chapters, hypotheses on the influences of parental socialisation, formative environments, periodical circumstances and personal experiences were formulated and tested. A wide variety of datasets and methodologies were employed to arrive at my results. Two of these datasets I collected myself, with the purpose of answering specific questions developed in the process of writing this dissertation. In this final chapter findings are summarised and the implications of these findings for other research are discussed. The chapter concludes with some suggestions for future research.

8.1 Summary

Parents, cohorts and periods

Chapter 2 investigates attitude socialisation by the parents. The main question posed in this chapter was to what extent parents transmit their attitudes to their children, and which characteristics of the family would ameliorate this intergenerational transmission. Structural Equation Models (SEM) were estimated on data gathered among primary respondents, their parents and their siblings. When studying attitudes over time, I argued in the first chapter that socialisation by the parents leads to stability of attitudes over time, whereas cohort and period effects can both account for observed changes. The focus of this chapter was on the intergenerational transmission of attitudes as a buffer against social change. It showed that parental socialisation has a lasting influence on the attitudes of adults. Influences of parental attitudes on the child's attitudes at age 15 were established for respondents of all ages, albeit less for older respondents with respect to two of the three attitudes. This finding suggests that either people deviate in attitudes from their socialisation as a consequence of the process of growing older, or that older respondents have made a change in the direction of the observed aggregate trend towards less opposition to euthanasia and homosexuality under the influence of periodical circumstances. Although parents are successful in socialising their children, especially couples who share the same attitudes between them and have a good relationship with their offspring, I also showed that children are less intolerant than their parents. This finding already implies change over time.

In Chapters 3 and 4 the main question was how changes in aggregate levels of intolerance over time in the Netherlands could be explained. Cohort and period predictors for the observed trends in aggregate intolerance for the three issues were tested. A large proportion of the shifts towards less intolerance of euthanasia and homosexuality can be explained by cohort succession. Most importantly, since the composition of cohorts has changed with respect to religiousness, intolerance of

these issues has decreased. Not only the composition of cohorts, but also the distinct formative experiences of the different cohorts have led to aggregate changes in intolerance. I tried to identify characteristics of the socialisation experiences of cohorts that could explain the differences in intolerance between them, but none of the theoretical arguments could account for the exceptionally tolerant position of the war-born generation.

Although the same war-born cohorts stand out as especially low in ethnic distance, the increase in ethnic distance could not be explained by replacing the old with the young. On the contrary, the changes in the composition of the successive cohorts forecast a decrease in intolerance, if anything. The younger cohorts are on average much more highly educated than the older cohorts, and the increase in educational attainment would predict a reduction in the levels of intolerance of the younger cohorts. Here, periodical circumstances evidently deflect from the longer-term cohort trend of decreasing intolerance. All individuals have grown gradually more distant towards ethnic minorities as time passed and more migrants came to live in the Netherlands. However, people from the tolerant cohorts remain the least intolerant, even though their level of intolerance is rising as well. Both periodical circumstances and cohort-specific characteristics can thus explain the observed trends.

Individual religiousness increased in strength as a predictor of opposition to euthanasia and homosexual lifestyles. Religious people deviate more in recent years than somewhat longer ago from people who are not religious. This was expected, as the Netherlands has seen a decline in church membership and those with the least religious values were probably the first to leave the church. A lack of strong identification with religious morality is in itself already a sign of weak integration in a religious community, and it is no surprise that the least attached members of the churches left. Those who remained have on average stronger beliefs and adhere more fervently to religious morality. Neither the religious groups nor the secular group are transmitting their norms to each other. The aggregate attitudes of the two groups are divergent.

With respect to educational attainment, the development takes the opposite direction for euthanasia and homosexual lifestyles and is mixed for intolerance of ethnic minorities. The effect of a higher education on ethnic intolerance was decreasing in the 1970s and 1980s, was increasing in the 1990s, and appears to be dropping again. The higher educated are a less selective group than they used to be in their intolerance levels. They may be more successful in spreading their norms to lower educated groups than vice versa, although not on intolerance of ethnic minorities. When it comes to the attitudes towards this group, it is the lower educated who appear to be spreading their positions. The premises from Ethnic Competition theory applied in this dissertation may also provide an answer for this pattern, because due to upward mobility among migrants, middle- and higher-educated people are likely to perceive stronger ethnic competition than before.

Personal experiences and the life course

The main research question of chapter 6 was whether personal experiences induce individual attitude change. Hypotheses were derived from Contact theory. In this field, the causal-sequence problem of contact affecting attitudes or vice versa is hardly tackled in research designs. Moreover, studies focus almost solely on positive contact effects. To elaborate on this state of the art, I employed the Family Survey Dutch Population 2003 with recalled attitudes as well as the SOCON 1995-2006 panel survey, which I collected, to answer questions on the link between personal experiences and intolerance. Hierarchical linear growth curve models and autoregressive SEM models were employed to test the effects of these personal experiences. I showed that personal experiences with ethnic minority members indeed have a lasting effect on intolerance towards these groups. Positive experiences led to lower levels of intolerance, whereas negative experiences increased intolerance. For this book, I was unable to test whether these personal experiences actually contribute to the aggregate change in observed attitudes. The increased number of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands since the 1960s has led to many majority members having personal experiences with minority members. As argued in chapter 6, many of these experiences will no doubt be pleasant or harmless, but some are bound to be of the negative kind. Bad things can happen when people interact, and this might be even more the case when people differ in customs and manners. Assuming that these negative experiences are more discussed with friends and family, as I suggested, and that they are more easily remembered since they reinforce existing stereotypes, the impact of negative experiences can be much larger than that of positive experiences. The incidences of some of the experiences were rather low, especially in the panel data that I collected myself, but both the panel data and the retrospective results provided an answer in the same direction: positive contact reduces intolerance, whereas negative contact increases intolerance. Even though the total effects for society may be regarded as modest, because only a small part of the population experiences new contacts, they clearly corroborate the hypotheses derived from Contact theory. Comparable to the suggestions of Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), the conditions for the effects of contact do not need to be met in order for the contact to have an effect.

In Chapter 7 the life course was introduced as a final elaboration of my research. The question was again whether personal experiences can change attitudes, but now it was extended to when over the life course people are most susceptible to change. Once more, the premises of Contact theory were used to test to what extent positive personal experiences – and which experiences specifically – with an outgroup, in this case homosexuals, could induce attitudinal changes. But now, the young were compared to the old in their ability to change their attitudes after profound personal experiences. Some differences were observed in the levels of attitude change, with older respondents less likely to change after experiencing the coming out of a friend. However, when it concerned homosexual relatives, older people lowered their

intolerance as much as younger persons. Again, I made the case that as more and more homosexuals expressed their sexuality over time and same-sex marriages became possible in recent years, more majority members will have personal experiences with homosexuals. These could also be of a negative kind and thus lead to more intolerance, but sexual orientation is not as immediately recognisable as ethnicity so chances are lower that these negative encounters will be automatically linked to homosexuality. Because of the rather intimate nature of voicing sexual orientations, this will probably happen more often in encounters with closer relations, such as acquaintances, colleagues or neighbours than with strangers. According to Contact theory, it is the superficial encounters which enforce stereotypes and negative outgroup attitudes.

Recalling attitudes

Chapter 5 was a detour from my argument, in which I studied the possibilities of using recalled attitudes in survey research. The research questions were to what extent people are able to recall attitudes; whether there are frequent biases in recall; which groups might be more accurate in recalling; and to what extent the recalled attitudes can be useful in the study of attitudinal change. Theoretical arguments in this chapter differed very much from the central theme, yet I did address the question of whether the observed changes when one looks at the aggregated levels of intolerance could be an artefact, and that in fact 'true' attitudes were not changing. The theories from cognitive psychology that were employed in this chapter to derive hypotheses were mostly corroborated by the results. People's memories do erroneous but systematic things when they try to recall attitudes. However, even though I found a strong consistency bias as well as an inclination to project the change in aggregate attitudes to the change in themselves, using the attitudes people recalled instead of the attitudes that were stated contemporaneously did not lead to notable differences in the results obtained in the causal modelling. Although in a few instances parameters did differ significantly between the use of recalled and contemporaneous data, overall the use of recalled attitudes for causal modelling seemed promising. It should be stressed here that the recalled data are useless when one wants to map individual changes, because chances of severe distortion by biases in the recall are too large. I was unable to identify any characteristics of the respondents that could upgrade the quality of the recall. Respondents did not differ in any systematic way in their ability to recall their previously stated attitudes, apart from those who claimed more certainty in recall that were indeed marginally better in their recollections.. Because I relied on previously collected data in 1995, some of the attitudes were measured by single items. Comparing results between the attitudes measured with multiple items and single items, I would advise using multiple items to measure intolerance and changes in intolerance for future research. Although I have no doubt as to whether in general my results are real, reducing the level of measurement error would elucidate results and leave less room for discussion on the level of 'true' changes and effects of personal experiences on these changes.

8.2 Implications

The cohort and period indicators collected and incorporated in my models as predictors of aggregate attitude changes did not do so well. Although relevant quantifiable indicators were incorporated, these could not explain much of the observed aggregate changes in intolerance. The exceptional position of the cohorts born roughly between 1930 and 1955 has not been satisfactorily explained. It is beyond the scope of this book to further my investigation along this path, but what it is exactly that makes these cohorts stand out remains a puzzling question. For all three attitudes in this book, people born roughly between 1930 and 1955 are less intolerant than cohorts born earlier or later, given their level of education and religiousness. Experiencing the social movements that shaped the 1960s at a relatively young age or a rapidly increasing post-war prosperity during adolescence apparently left a lasting impression on these cohorts. Davis (2004) concluded that for the United States, reaching the age of 16 in the 1950s or 1960s (i.e. being born between 1934 and 1953) somehow led to a lasting and more liberal stance on a range of issues above the long-term trend towards more tolerance, a finding for which he stresses the importance of experiencing the large protest movements of the 1960s. However, these movements that often mobilise the young are in themselves already expressions of a lower level of intolerance. Inglehart (1990) emphasises prosperous economic circumstances as formative experiences that change people's focus away from materialistic values and towards more post-materialistic orientations, including tolerance. However, in the Netherlands economic prosperity came too late for many of the people that were identified as belonging to tolerant cohorts. And the younger cohorts that grew up during even more prosperous circumstances are not less intolerant, or even more once controlled for their individual levels of education and religiousness. Another explanation might be derived from the Netherlands's experience with Nazi occupation first-hand, and the fact that the country had to come to terms with collaborators after the war. Dealing with 'traitors' and enemies within, and coming to terms with the relatively large number of Dutch Jews who did not survive the war, may have led the young – the too young to be responsible that is – to have set themselves apart from their parents and embrace tolerance in general as normative. These experiences may have served as a reference point by which all their attitudes were measured ever since.

A second implication of my research concerns the debate on the nature of attitudes. Little evidence was found for the existence of non-attitudes. The fact that people can remember their attitudes towards important public topics to some extent, and that those who cannot remember then show distinct patterns in their deviance from the originally stated attitudes towards their present attitudes, implies that most likely there is no 80 percent of the population with non-attitudes that answer randomly to attitudinal questions. If people can recall previous attitudes, they were probably not random. Although large biases were found in the attitude recall, I was able to employ them without much difficulty for causal modelling.

8.3 Suggestions for future research

As always, this endeavour has resulted in some partial answers and raised more questions than could have been imaginable at the start of the project. I consider especially fascinating to pursue a few of the questions that were raised as a follow-up of the results obtained throughout the chapters in this book. The proposals elaborated on here concern a more contextualised approach to socialisation; an elaboration of the idea that on an aggregated level, personal experiences can lead to change; further investigation into the usefulness of recalled attitudes for social scientists; and an idea that the consequences of changes in intolerance deserve more academic attention.

First, when writing this study I rarely encountered the combination of a perspective on socialisation as a decisive factor in social change *and* as a buffer against it. I believe this is a worthwhile road to explore, as the combination can have far-reaching consequences on how we think of socialisation. I would encourage research on the factors that hamper or facilitate socialisation processes between family members into two directions. One factor is no longer to think of parents' attitudes and levels of intolerance as stable during the time they raise their children, the other is to combine socialisation within the family with contextual characteristics of societies and historical times to better understand under which societal conditions parents are more or less successful in transmitting their attitudes.

There is no reason why parental levels of intolerance should remain stable throughout the time they raise their children. They could for instance have personal experiences that reshape their attitudes. The experience of having children itself could have an impact on parents' outlook on life. More significantly, the questions children pose on important attitudes when they are between the ages of 15 and 18 – the years focussed on in this book – may affect parental attitudes as well. I showed in Chapter 2 that parents who differ from each other in attitudes are less successful transmitters of intolerance. Parents who change attitudes during the upbringing of their children send out mixed signals as well. Parental socialisation would then not only be a buffer against change, but could actually cause change. Designs that allow for an investigation of multiple generations could disentangle whether people actually try to pass on things like lower levels of intolerance. Do parents transmit to their children what they themselves were raised with? Or do they try to do things differently in their own parenting practices? Apart from the changes parents may experience while they socialise their children, they may even be affected by their children and change in their levels of intolerance as a result. Only longitudinal designs can sort these mutual influences on intolerance between parents and their children (cf. Poortman & Van Tilburg, 2005).

Another, perhaps even more fascinating road to explore, that very few studies I encountered dealt with, is the context in which socialisation takes place. Under some periodical circumstances, for instance of relative economic stability and a lack of large protest movements, parents may be more successful in transmitting their attitudes and beliefs to their children than in times of relative societal unrest. Parental socialisation

could also be harder when the parents themselves have uncommon attitudes or beliefs. The pressure from the majority's values could in such cases be too large to be countered by parents. Studies that focus on parent-to-child attitude transmission over time and across countries could identify contextual characteristics that hamper parental socialisation attempts and family characteristics that can resist important contextual influences.

Second, personal experiences can be powerful forces in individual attitude changes. I have identified only some personal experiences – although I believe to have included some of the most relevant attitude-related experiences. It would be worthwhile to find out whether these personal experiences add up to aggregate changes in societal levels of intolerance. When contexts change, certain sorts of personal experiences will become more common. Because same-sex marriages were unattainable prior to 2002, gay marriages have only recently become one of the experiences that could ameliorate attitudes towards homosexuals even further. In the Netherlands, and all over the Western world, people have and will continue to have a growing number of encounters with members from ethnic minority groups. I consider these interethnic contacts a key development for the not-too-distant future; an ability to understand how changes in the number of these personal experiences lead to change in aggregate intolerance of both majority and minority groups in society is important information for promoting social cohesion. Contact theory has thus far focused mainly on individual changes in attitudes, and studied almost exclusively positive intergroup experiences. In future research, prospective designs that include both positive and negative personal experiences could be combined with relevant cohort and period indicators to determine the relative contribution of each of these three levels to the explanations for aggregate-level changes in intolerance.

Third, the use of recalled attitudes in surveys deserves far more attention from sociologists and those who are interested in pragmatic reliabilities rather than individual accuracies than it has received thus far. For future survey researchers, who lack the funding or the time to collect prospective data over twenty years, knowing whether respondents can be questioned retrospectively on their attitudes is valuable knowledge. Especially questions on how to increase the validity of recalled attitudes and the best predictors of individual levels of accuracy in recall can be of great use. Although I do not believe that survey questionnaires will ever outfox the strange tricks our memory plays on us, there is definitely room for improvement. Particularly worth it is pursuing future investigations that focus on how useful these retrospectively obtained data can be instead of how accurate the recalled data are, as most who addressed this issue have pointed out that recall of attitudes is at best not a good idea, and at worst impossible. Hardly any of the previous studies were interested in finding out whether effect sizes actually differ between the use of recalled and contemporaneous data. My results have shown that although recalled attitudes are flawed, they can be useful in research. Definite answers to when, under which circumstances, and on what topics these retrospective questions on attitudes can be more or less valuable, remain to be sought.

Finally, another step I would like to encourage, and which reaches beyond the scope of this book, would be to address the influences of the changes in Dutch intolerance on the outcomes for some or all of the citizens in the Netherlands. What did liberalisation towards homosexual rights and stricter laws for immigrants actually mean for the well-being and life successes of these groups? What did the legalisation of euthanasia mean to the elderly or the ill, and to their families? To truly address social change, one must ask these sorts of questions too. Although levels of intolerance are in themselves fascinating and important topics to study, it is the consequences of intolerance which can really harm people. No doubt, intolerance increases intergroup tensions in societies and can lead to harmful acts. Being able to express their sexuality has very likely lowered stress levels and increased well-being for homosexuals. In this book I have proposed and tested many causes and predictors of the observed changes in intolerance in the Netherlands, yet many questions remain to be posed on the consequences of changes in intolerance over time.

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Appendices

Appendix 2A Structural Effects of Parent's Background on Parents' Negative Attitudes towards Euthanasia, Homosexuality and the Presence of Ethnic Minorities

Effects of parental background on parental attitudes towards homosexuality, euthanasia and ethnic minorities

	Disapproval of euthanasia			Disapproval of homosexuality			Disapproval of presence of ethnic minorities		
	b	s.e.	beta	b	s.e.	beta	b	s.e.	beta
parental characteristics									
Father's education on father's attitude				-.164	.020	-.304***	-.174	.020	-.371***
Mother's education on mother's attitude	-.237	.030	-.262***	-.239	.025	-.330***	-.214	.023	-.372***
Parental church attendance on father's attitude				.206	.016	.457***	-.019	.015	-.049
Parental church attendance on mother's attitude	.379	.020	.611***	.245	.016	.492***	013	.014	.032
Unexplained variance of father's attitude						.699			.860
Unexplained variance of mother's attitude			.529			.627			.859
N			1740			1839			1735

****=p < .001*
Source: FNB 2003

Appendix 2B Interaction Effects with Family Characteristics for the Influence of Paternal Attitude

Interaction effects with family characteristics for the influence of paternal disapproval of euthanasia, homosexuality, and ethnic minorities, b coefficients

		Disapproval of euthanasia (N=1740)		Disapproval of hmosexuality (N=1839)		Disapproval of the presence of ethnic minorities (N=1735)	
gender:	female	.716		.689		.336	
	male	.696		.676		.426	
Chi-square difference test (1 df)		.013		.023		5.975	*
age:	< 40 years old	.941		.948		.195	
	> 40 years old	.550		.609		.259	
Chi-square difference test (1 df)		39.446	***	8.684	**	2.322	
warm family:	weak	.589		.519		.314	
	strong	.819		.761		.403	
Chi-square difference test (1 df)		17.792	***	2.983		4.268	*
# siblings:	<= 2	.662		.638		.380	
	>= 3	.741		.760		.377	
Chi-square difference test (1 df)		1.234		1.571		.009	
difference in parental attitude:	yes	.302		.487		.325	
	no	.823		.783		.607	
Chi-square difference test (1 df)		35.236	***	9.283	**	11.161	**

****=p < .001; **=p < .01; *=p < .05; ~=p <.10*
Source: FNB 2003

Appendix 3A Cohort differences only in attitude towards homosexuals and ethnic distance

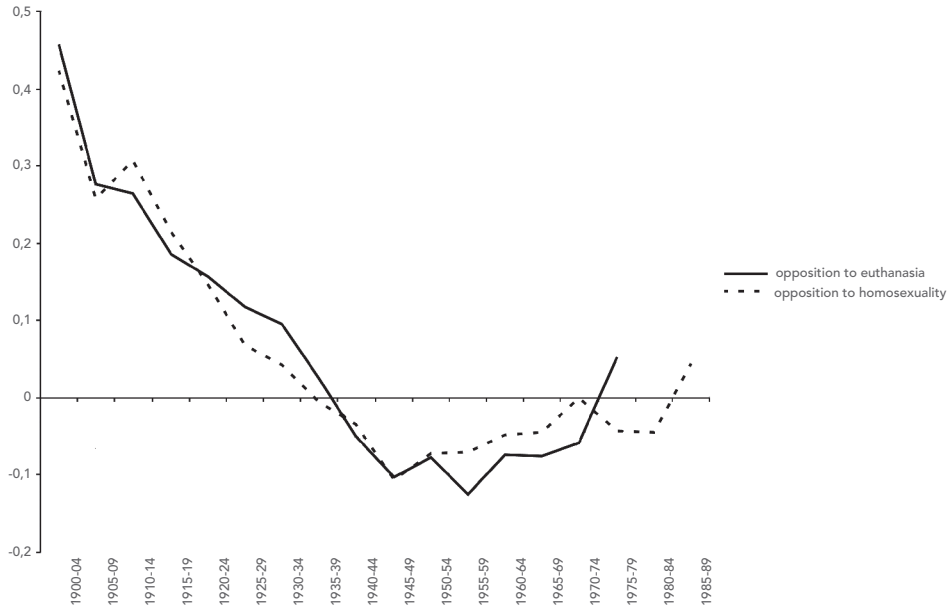
	opposition towards homosexuals			ethnic distance		
	b		se	b		se
Cohorts						
Pre WWI (<1919)	1.10	**	.09	.70	**	.05
Interbellum: (1919-1930)	.74	**	.09	.68	**	.04
Depression / WWII (1931-1945)	.33	**	.09	.43	**	.03
Re-building (1946 – 1954) - *reference*						
Sixties (1955-1969)	.04		.09	-.12	**	.03
Seventies and later (>1969)	.17		.16	-.14	**	.05
Intercept	-2.64			-.26		
Year-intercept variance	.27	**	.12	.08	**	.03
Respondent-intercept variance	1			1		

Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-2002; European Social Survey 2002-2004

Appendix 3B **Descriptive measures of period and cohort socialisation indicators**

	minimum	maximum	mean	SD
Attitude towards Homosexuals (N=21,701)				
Period indicators				
% non religious per year	22.50	40.00	32.95	5.74
% Christians in government per year	0.00	0.64	0.23	0.21
number of COC members per year / 1,000	5.49	9.91	7.48	1.43
number of AIDS infections per year	0.00	506.00	225.98	192.66
Cohort socialization indicators				
average % non-religious at respondent age 15-18	5.30	39.80	20.66	5.74
average % Christians in government at respondent age 15-18	0.00	0.86	0.65	0.14
Ethnic distance (N=33,853)				
Period indicators				
% liberals in government per year	0.00	0.64	0.37	0.23
increase in % of non-western inhabitants per year*10	1.00	4.00	2.94	0.90
% unemployed per year	2.30	11.70	5.81	2.18
Cohort socialization indicators				
average number of non-Western immigrants at respondent age 15-18	0.00	68.10	25.42	13.19
average % unemployed at respondent age 15-18	0.80	15.30	4.51	3.71

Appendix 4A **Average deviance per birth cohort from mean (z-scores) proportion objecting to euthanasia and homosexual lifestyles over all years that birth cohort was included in sample**



Appendix 4B Cohort differences only in attitude towards homosexuals and euthanasia

	opposition towards homosexuals			opposition towards euthanasia		
	b		se	b		se
Cohorts						
Pre WWI (<1919)	1.10	**	.09	.96	**	.07
Interbellum: (1919-1930)	.74	**	.09	.67	**	.06
Depression / WWII (1931-1945)	.33	**	.09	.37	**	.06
reconstruction (1946-1954) - ref.						
1960s (1955-1969)	.04		.09	-.11		.06
1970s and later (>1969)	.17		.16	-.07		.10
Intercept	-2.64			-2.26		.07
Year-intercept variance	.27	**	.12	.05	**	.02
Respondent-intercept variance	1			1		

Source: Cultural Changes in the Netherlands 1970-1998 IPV 1970-2002

Appendix 4C Descriptive measures of period and cohort socialisation indicators

	minimum	maximum	mean	SD
Attitude towards Homosexuals (N=21,701)				
Period indicators				
% non religious per year	22.50	40.00	32.95	5.74
% Christians in government per year	0.00	0.64	0.23	0.21
number of COC members per year / 1,000	5.49	9.91	7.48	1.43
number of AIDS infections per year	0.00	506.00	225.98	192.66
Cohort socialization indicators				
average % non-religious at respondent age 15-18	5.30	39.80	20.66	5.74
average % Christians in government at respondent age 15-18	0.00	0.86	0.65	0.14
Euthanasia distance (N=29,136)				
Period indicators				
% non religious per year	22.50	40.00	33.50	6.04
% Christians in government per year	0.00	0.79	0.41	0.27
nursing home beds per 1,000 inhabitants	1.56	3.67	3.32	0.48
slow deaths as per 100,000 inhabitants	237.80	330.10	292.43	29.14
Cohort socialisation indicators				
average % non-religious at respondent age 15-18	5.30	39.80	20.94	5.98
average % Christians in government at respondent age 15-18	0.00	0.86	0.65	0.14

Appendix 5A Percentage of respondents of total sample reporting having experienced an event ever; having experienced it for the first time after 1995; having experienced it at all after 1995; and for those with an event the average frequency of the event between 1995 and 2006

	Event ever	First time event after 1995	Event after 1995	Average frequency of event
Homosexual friend	35.6	8.9	32.7	2.47 (1-5)
Homosexual relative	30.0	6.5	27.5	1.40 (1-5)
Threat minorities	9.7	5.9	8.0	1.85 (1-5)
Visit minorities	32.0	8.8	25.2	31.82 (1-100)
Mixed marriage	17.4	7.9	14.6	1.52 (1-5)
Minority marriage	8.7	4.7	8.2	1.61 (1-5)
Death in family	79.8	35.3	73.9	2.71 (1-5)
Euthanasia in family	23.9	15.0	21.9	1.28 (1-2)
Own illness	14.8	8.6	14.0	1.20 (1-2)
Illness in family	71.6	36.1	68.8	2.56 (1-5)

Source: SOCON 2006

Appendix 5B Table for current by contemporaneous by recalled opposition to euthanasia

		Recalled disapproval of euthanasia		Total
Current disapproval of euthanasia	Contemporaneous disapproval of euthanasia	1.00	.00	
1.00	.00	52	2	54
	1.00	33	6	39
	Total	85	8	93
.00	.00	7	25	32
	1.00	13	447	460
	Total	20	472	492

Source: SOCON 1995; 2006

Appendix 5C Full table for current by contemporaneous by recalled intolerance towards homosexuality

		Recalled level of intolerance towards homosexuality					Total
Current level of intolerance towards homosexuality	Contemporaneous level of intolerance towards homosexuality	5.00	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	
5.00	5.00	6		0			6
	4.00	2		1			3
	3.00	1		0			1
	2.00	0		1			1
	Total	9		2			11
4.00	5.00	1	5				6
	4.00	5	16				21
	3.00	1	2				3
	2.00	1	2				3
	Total	8	25				33
3.00	5.00		2	2	0		4
	4.00		7	9	1		17
	3.00		5	28	2		35
	2.00		3	24	1		28
	1.00		2	3	0		5
	Total		19	66	4		89
2.00	5.00		1	0	0	0	1
	4.00		1	9	6	0	16
	3.00		2	8	31	0	41
	2.00		7	21	71	1	100
	1.00		0	3	11	1	15
	Total		11	41	119	2	173
1.00	5.00			0	0	1	1
	3.00			1	1	5	7
	2.00			2	7	21	30
	1.00			0	4	34	38
	Total			3	12	61	76

Source: SOCON 1995; 2006

Appendix 5D Full table for current by contemporaneous by recalled intolerance towards ethnic minorities

		Recalled level of intolerance towards ethnic minorities					Total
Current level of intolerance towards ethnic minorities	Contemporaneous level of intolerance towards ethnic minorities	5.00	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	
5.00	5.00	2	0	1			3
	4.00	6	1	0			7
	3.00	3	0	4			7
	2.00	1	1	0			2
	Total	12	2	5			19
4.00	5.00	0	2	2	0		4
	4.00	3	21	1	0		25
	3.00	4	26	17	1		48
	2.00	0	3	9	1		13
	1.00	0	0	1	0		1
	Total	7	52	30	2		91
3.00	4.00	0	3	5	0		8
	3.00	1	12	39	5		57
	2.00	1	8	37	12		58
	1.00	0	0	5	0		5
	Total	2	23	86	17		128
2.00	4.00		0	2	2	0	4
	3.00		0	4	12	1	17
	2.00		2	10	54	2	68
	1.00		0	1	6	1	8
	Total		2	17	75	4	97
1.00	3.00			0	1	0	1
	2.00			3	2	2	7
	1.00			0	1	1	2
	Total			3	4	3	10

Source: SOCON 1995; 2006

Appendix 6A Descriptive statistics and bivariate Pearson correlations with prejudice towards ethnic minorities in 2006 for study 1

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	r^2	
man	341	.00	1.00	.44	.50	.099	*
age	344	29.00	81.00	54.96	12.54	-.079	
educational attainment	341	4.00	18.00	12.18	3.12	-.255	***
religious	344	.00	1.00	.46	.50	.035	
threatened by ethnic minority member	344	.00	1.00	.04	.19	.044	
played/visited with ethnic minorities	344	.00	1.00	.05	.21	-.030	
attended mixed wedding	344	.00	1.00	.06	.24	-.181	**
1995 attitude towards ethnic minorities	342	1.00	5.00	2.94	.89	.562	***

** p < .05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001*
Source: SOCON panel 1995-2006

Appendix 6B Descriptive statistics and bivariate Pearson correlations with disapproval of the presence of ethnic minorities for study 2

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	r^2	
man	6354	.00	1.00	.50	.50	.083	***
age centered	6354	-14.78	46.22	.68	14.14	-.029	*
educational attainment	6354	.00	10.00	4.26	2.71	-.215	***
religious	6354	.00	1.00	.49	.50	.074	***
threatened by ethnic minority member	6354	.00	1.00	.09	.28	.058	***
played/visited with ethnic minorities	6354	.00	1.00	.20	.40	-.167	***
attended mixed marriage	6354	.00	1.00	.09	.29	-.093	***

* p < .05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001
Source: Dutch Family Survey 2003

Summary in Dutch – Nederlandstalige samenvatting

Hoofdstuk 1 Inleiding

Tolerantie is een belangrijk kenmerk van moderne democratieën en intolerantie tegenover andere groepen en tegenover bepaalde gedragingen van andere groepen of zelfs de eigen groep, is een goede maat voor de cohesie in een samenleving. Immers, intolerantie kan leiden tot afscheiding of zelfs geweld. Het bestuderen van intolerantie en de veranderingen daarin over de tijd is daarom een goede graadmeter van sociale verandering. De onderzoeksvraag van dit proefschrift luidt:
In welke mate zijn de Nederlandse houdingen naar euthanasie, homoseksualiteit en de aanwezigheid van etnische minderheden veranderd, en hoe kunnen deze veranderingen worden verklaard?

Veranderingen in tolerantie op het niveau van de samenleving kunnen op verschillende manieren ontstaan. Door het proces van cohortvervanging sterven de oudere cohorten in een samenleving, terwijl er steeds jongere geboortecohorten bijkomen. Als de oudere en jongere cohorten sterk van elkaar verschillen in de mate waarin ze intolerant zijn, dan neemt na verloop van tijd de gemiddelde intolerantie in een samenleving toe of af. Deze cohorteffecten werken langzaam, er is immers een extreem verschil van mening nodig tussen de oudste en jongste cohorten om binnen een tijdsbestek van een paar jaar al verandering te kunnen waarnemen.
Door periode-invloeden kunnen hele plotselinge veranderingen in de mate van intolerantie zich voordoen. Bepaalde gebeurtenissen, of omstandigheden, beïnvloeden iedereen in een samenleving tegelijkertijd. Door de kenmerken van een bepaalde periode in de historische tijd verandert dan soms juist wel binnen korte tijd de mate van intolerantie van de samenleving als geheel. Deze cohort- en periode-effecten worden veelvuldig bestudeerd door sociologen. Ook ik zal ruimschoots aandacht aan beide besteden.

Het meest vernieuwende onderdeel van mijn proefschrift ligt in het bestuderen van persoonlijke ervaringen die individuele veranderingen in intolerantie veroorzaken. Hierbij kan gedacht worden aan gebeurtenissen als de coming-out van een familielid, of het voor het eerst op bezoek gaan bij iemand uit een etnische minderheidsgroep. Wanneer zich door externe factoren een sterke groei voordoet in het aantal mensen dat dergelijke ervaringen heeft, kan toch maatschappelijke verandering ontstaan. Zo hebben tegenwoordig veel meer mensen ervaringen met etnische minderheden dan dertig jaar geleden, simpelweg omdat etnische minderheden een groter deel van de huidige Nederlandse samenleving uitmaken.

In de zes empirische hoofdstukken die volgen beantwoord ik telkens vragen over verandering in intolerantie. Ik bekijk zowel veranderingen in de mate van intolerantie in de samenleving, als veranderingen in de mate van intolerantie van individuen. In het laatste hoofdstuk van mijn proefschrift vat ik de conclusies samen, bediscussieer tekortkomingen en doe aanbevelingen voor mogelijk vervolgonderzoek.

Hoofdstuk 2 De overdracht van intolerantie binnen gezinnen.

Hoewel ik in de inleiding met name aandacht heb besteed aan verandering in intolerantie, begin ik met een onderzoeksvraag naar stabiliteit tussen generaties, die luidt: *In welke mate beïnvloeden ouders de opvattingen van hun kinderen over euthanasie, homoseksualiteit en ethische minderheden, en welke kenmerken van het gezin versterken of verzwakken die invloed?*

Ouders trachten vrijwel altijd hun kinderen op te voeden tot volwassenen met dezelfde morele basis als zij zelf. De vraag is hoe succesvol zij daarin zijn. In dit hoofdstuk onderzoek ik met behulp van informatie van een of twee volwassen kinderen en van een van de ouders, in hoeverre volwassen kinderen nog op hun ouders lijken in hun opvattingen.

Er zijn twee perspectieven op de gelijkenis tussen ouders en hun kinderen in opvattingen. Het eerste ziet ouders als succesvolle socialiseerders. Kinderen lijken op hun ouders omdat deze bewust moeite hebben gedaan hun opvattingen over te dragen. De andere opvatting over familie gelijkenissen in opvattingen meent dat volwassen kinderen op hun ouders lijken omdat ze in maatschappelijke posities op elkaar lijken. Opvattingen worden voor een belangrijk deel bepaald door religiositeit en de hoogte van de opleiding. Omdat ouders juist deze kenmerken overbrengen - of een kind religieus wordt, hangt grotendeels af van de religiositeit van de ouders, en ook opleidingstrajecten worden in belangrijke mate door de ouders beïnvloed - lijken volwassen kinderen op hun ouders. Beide perspectieven worden gebruikt om specifieke hypothesen af te leiden die vervolgens worden getoetst. Daarnaast onderzoek ik of kenmerken van het gezin de overdracht faciliteren. Ik maak gebruik van de Familie Enquête Nederlandse Bevolking 2003 (De Graaf, De Graaf, Kraaykamp en Ultee). Ik gebruik structurele modellen met behulp van het computerprogramma Lisrel om de gegevens te analyseren.

Ouders blijken inderdaad de opvattingen van hun volwassen kinderen te beïnvloeden. Een deel van die invloed verloopt direct, een ander deel via de overdracht van maatschappelijke posities. Voorts verloopt de overdracht succesvoller in gezinnen die door de kinderen als warm worden gekenschetst en bleken moeders een grotere invloed dan vaders te hebben. In gezinnen waarin de ouders van mening verschillen over euthanasie, homoseksualiteit en etnische minderheden, is de invloed van de ouders kleiner. Dat is volgens de verwachtingen, want kinderen in dergelijke gezinnen krijgen twee verschillende boodschappen in plaats van twee maal dezelfde boodschap. In dit hoofdstuk werd de invloed bestudeerd van de houding van de ouders ten tijde van het zestiende levensjaar van het kind. Er werd aangenomen dat ouders relatief stabiel zijn in hun opvattingen, maar dit hoeft niet het geval te zijn. Een longitudinaal perspectief kan dit laatste beter onderzoeken.

Hoofdstuk 3 Veranderingen in Nederlandse intolerantie naar minderheidsgroepen, 1970-2004

Dit is het eerste van twee hoofdstukken waarin de verandering in intolerantie in de Nederlandse samenleving wordt onderzocht. Dit hoofdstuk beschrijft en verklaart de veranderingen in intolerantie naar twee zogenaamde 'out-groups'. Daartoe onderzoek ik de veranderingen in houdingen naar homoseksualiteit en etnische minderheden tussen 1970 en 2004. Om de trend te kunnen onderzoeken gebruik ik data uit verschillende jaren van het Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, en de eerste en tweede rondes van het European Social Survey.

De houding naar homoseksualiteit is veel permissiever geworden in deze periode, van mensen geboren in alle jaren. Dat is een aanwijzing voor een periode-effect. Tegelijkertijd bestaan er duidelijk verschillen tussen de verschillende geboortecohorten, en die verschillen blijven vrijwel gelijk over de gehele onderzochte periode. Of men nu 1970 of 1983 bekijkt, de groep mensen geboren tussen 1946 en 1954 vertoont een even groot verschil in intolerantie met de groep mensen geboren tussen 1919 en 1930. Dit duidt op een cohorteffect. Voor de houding naar etnische minderheden zijn vergelijkbare periode- en cohortinvloeden zichtbaar, al is de trend in dit geval naar meer intolerantie over de tijd. In dit hoofdstuk worden met behulp van theorieën hypothesen afgeleid over specifieke omstandigheden waarin geboortecohorten opgroeiden en die hun mening vormden, en specifieke periode kenmerken die alle cohorten tegelijk beïnvloeden in de mate waarin deze intolerant zijn naar homoseksualiteit en etnische minderheden. De hypothesen zijn getoetst met behulp van multi-niveau analyses. De verandering in de mate van intolerantie naar homoseksualiteit bleek met name te worden verklaard door cohortverschillen. Oudere cohorten zijn vaker religieus, en minder hoog opgeleid. Religiositeit en een laag opleidingsniveau zijn belangrijke voorspellers van een negatieve houding naar homoseksuelen. Ook mannen zijn vaker intolerant naar homoseksualiteit. Ik kon niet ontdekken welke omstandigheden tijdens de jeugd nu precies cohortverschillen kunnen verklaren. Er is gevonden dat het geboortecohort 1946-1954 het meest tolerante cohort is, gecontroleerd voor de mate van religiositeit en het opleidingsniveau. Mogelijk speelt hier het afzetten tegen de uitwassen van intolerantie van de Tweede Wereldoorlog een rol. Er zijn ook aanwijzingen voor periode-effecten. Hoe minder religieus de samenleving is, hoe minder intolerantie naar homoseksualiteit. Een toename in het aantal AIDS infecties doet echter de intolerantie naar homoseksuelen stijgen.

Voor de mate van intolerantie naar etnische minderheden blijken cohorteffecten minder belangrijk. Integendeel, aangezien opeenvolgende geboortecohorten steeds hoger zijn opgeleid en een hogere opleiding de weerstand naar etnische minderheden sterk doet afnemen, zou op grond van het natuurlijke proces van cohortvervanging juist een trend naar minder intolerantie zichtbaar moeten zijn. Het tegenovergestelde is echter het geval. Ik heb wel gevonden dat mensen die zijn opgegroeid ten tijde van meer immigratie, meer intolerantie naar etnische minderheden vertonen. Daarnaast zijn

ook periode-effecten belangrijk in de verklaring van de trend. Een hoger percentage etnische minderheden in de samenleving doet de intolerantie naar die groep toenemen. Ook een hoger percentage bewindslieden van liberale huize leidt tot een kleine toename in intolerantie naar etnische minderheden.

Tot slot is nog bekeken of de invloed van de individuele religiositeit en het opleidingsniveau in de loop van de tijd sterker zijn geworden. Omdat de minst gebonden kerkleden inmiddels de kerk hebben verlaten, en de individuen met meer capaciteiten steeds vaker een vervolgopleiding kunnen volgen, zijn de groepen van laagopgeleiden en religieuzen homogener geworden over de tijd. Het effect van opleidingsniveau en religiositeit zouden dus toe nemen over de tijd, zo was mijn verwachting. De bevindingen zijn gemengd. De invloed van individueel kerklidmaatschap op intolerantie naar homoseksualiteit is inderdaad toegenomen. Kerkleden anno 2004 wijken sterker af van niet-kerkleden in hun intolerantie tegen homoseksualiteit dan in 1970 het geval was.

De invloed van religiositeit op intolerantie naar etnische minderheden is niet toe- of afgenomen over de onderzochte periode. De invloed van opleidingshoogte op intolerantie naar homoseksualiteit is ook niet veranderd. Het effect van opleidingshoogte op weerstand naar etnische minderheden laat tot aan 1998 een toename zien. Opleidingsniveau wordt steeds belangrijker tussen 1975 en 1998 om de mate van intolerantie naar etnische minderheden te voorspellen. Vanaf 2000 neemt de invloed echter weer af. Sinds die tijd wijken Nederlanders met een hoog opleidingsniveau dus weer minder af van Nederlanders met een laag opleidingsniveau in de mate waarin ze weerstand tegen de aanwezigheid van etnische minderheden hebben.

Hoofdstuk 4 Veranderingen in Nederlandse moraliteit, 1970-2004

In dit hoofdstuk worden de veranderingen in houdingen naar euthanasie en homoseksualiteit onderzocht – twee aspecten die nauw verweven zijn in het morele kader van religies. In het vorige hoofdstuk is de mate van intolerantie naar homoseksualiteit in de Nederlandse samenleving en de verandering daarin tussen 1970 en 2004 reeds besproken. In deze samenvatting besteed ik daarom alleen aandacht aan de weerstand tegen euthanasie in Nederland tussen 1970 en 1998. Wederom maak ik gebruik van verschillende databestanden van het Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau, die worden geanalyseerd met behulp van multi-niveau modellen. Ook nu bekijk ik weer hoe de verandering over de tijd naar meer goedkeuring van euthanasie kan worden verklaard. Vergelijkbaar met de trend in intolerante tegenover homoseksualiteit, zijn Nederlanders sinds de jaren ‘70 ook beduidend toleranter geworden tegenover euthanasie. Naar aanleiding van de resultaten van voorgaand onderzoek, verwachtte ook ik dat mensen die een partner hadden verloren vaker voorstander van euthanasie zouden zijn. Dat bleek niet het geval in mijn analyses. Opnieuw bleek dat cohortvervanging een belangrijk deel van de waargenomen verandering in de houding naar euthanasie kan verklaren. Met name een afname van het aantal religieuze mensen in Nederland veroorzaakte een daling

in intolerantie naar euthanasie. In 1970 waren er procentueel meer mensen religieus en gingen meer mensen vaker naar de kerk dan in de jaren negentig van de vorige eeuw. Toch blijft na controle voor religiositeit en opleidingsniveau een verschil bestaan tussen de geboortecohorten. Mensen die geboren waren tussen 1931 en 1945 zijn minder vaak tegen euthanasie. Naar de concrete oorzaak van deze relatieve tolerantie blijft het nog zoeken. Tot slot bekijk ik ook in dit hoofdstuk in hoeverre de effecten van individuele religiositeit en opleidingsniveau veranderd zijn over de tijd. Het effect van religiositeit op de mening over euthanasie is sterker geworden over de onderzochte periode. Dat betekent dat religieuzen en niet-religieuzen door de tijd sterker van elkaar zijn gaan verschillen in hun opvattingen over euthanasie. Het effect van het behaalde opleidingsniveau is niet veranderd gedurende de onderzochte periode.

Hoofdstuk 5 Het gebruik van retrospectieve attitude metingen in survey onderzoek

Dit hoofdstuk is een apart onderdeel van mijn proefschrift. In de hoofdstukken 6 en 7 maak ik gebruik van retrospectieve data over attitudes. Respondenten hebben aangegeven hoe zij nu tegenover euthanasie, homoseksualiteit en etnische minderheden staan, maar ook hoe zij daar eerder over dachten. Om te achterhalen of dergelijke retrospectieve data wel bruikbaar zijn, heb ik een validiteitstudie opgezet.

In 1995 hebben zo'n 2000 Nederlanders deelgenomen aan het survey "Sociaal Culturele Ontwikkelingen in Nederland" (Eisinga et al, 1996). In 2006 besloot ik deze mensen opnieuw te benaderen. Met behulp van online telefoongidsen, en de medewerking van de Gemeentelijke Basis Administraties, wist ik van 1500 van deze respondenten het huidige adres te achterhalen. Uiteindelijk hebben 848 mensen de vragenlijst uit 2006 ingevuld. Hiervan waren 809 deelnemers bruikbaar voor de analyses. In 1995 hebben deze mensen vragen beantwoord over hun meningen over (onder andere) euthanasie, homoseksuele relaties en etnische minderheden. In 2006 heb ik diezelfde mensen gevraagd zich te herinneren hoe zij daar tien jaar eerder over dachten, én wat hun huidige mening was over deze drie onderwerpen. Mensen blijken niet zo goed te zijn in het zich herinneren van eerdere opvattingen. Twee belangrijke vertekeningen in hun herinneringen konden worden aangetoond. De grootste vertekening is naar het heden. De meeste mensen denken simpelweg dat ze altijd al zo gedacht hebben als ze nu doen. Daarnaast passen mensen zich soms ook aan aan de algemene trend in opvattingen over euthanasie, homoseksualiteit en etnische minderheden. Respondenten bleken vaker te denken dat zij in de richting van de algemene trend veranderd zijn in hun opvattingen, en minder vaak dat zij veranderd waren in tegengestelde richting, ook als dit in werkelijkheid wel het geval was. Ook heb ik onderzocht wie er nu beter was in zich herinneren van de attituden. Hierin bleek weinig verschil tussen mensen te bestaan. Alleen mensen die zeiden heel zeker te weten dat zij zich hun vroegere opvattingen juist herinnerden, bleken dat inderdaad iets beter te kunnen.

De belangrijkste vraag die ik wilde beantwoorden in dit hoofdstuk was echter of de retrospectief bevraagde houdingen gebruikt konden worden in causale, statistische modellen. Daarom heb ik telkens dezelfde analyse uitgevoerd met eerst de oorspronkelijke houdingen zoals die gerapporteerd waren in 1995, vervolgens met de houdingen van tien jaar eerder zoals ze werden herinnerd in 2006. Van de ongeveer 40 effecten die ik zo met elkaar kon vergelijken, bleken er slechts 5 significant van elkaar te verschillen. In het algemeen kan worden gesteld dat het gebruik van de retrospectieve houdingen voorzichtig kan worden toegepast in de volgende hoofdstukken.

Hoofdstuk 6 Positieve en negatieve contacteffecten met etnische minderheden

In het onderzoek naar contact tussen leden van verschillende groepen staat het positieve effect van contact meestal centraal. In navolging van een van de grondleggers van de contacttheorie, Allport (1954), hebben de meeste onderzoekers zich gericht op de vraag onder welke omstandigheden het effect van contact met iemand van een andere groep de meest positieve verandering teweeg brengt in de houding naar die groep als geheel. Het mechanisme achter die verandering wordt als een soort drietrapsraket bezien. Wanneer twee leden van verschillende etnische groepen elkaar ontmoeten, moeten zij elkaar ten eerste waarnemen als behorend tot een andere groep. Vervolgens dient de interactie tussen de twee in tegenstelling tot bestaande vooroordelen te verlopen. Tot slot dient de positieve contactervaring te worden gegeneraliseerd naar de groep als geheel.

Er is verrassend weinig onderzoek gedaan naar negatieve contactervaringen. Wanneer twee mensen elkaar ontmoeten vinden van tijd tot tijd negatieve interacties plaats, misschien nog wel meer wanneer de betreffende personen tot een andere cultuur behoren. Bovendien lijkt het logisch te veronderstellen dat negatieve contactervaringen, die stereotype bevestigend zijn, makkelijker worden gegeneraliseerd naar de groep als geheel dan de positieve ervaringen, die immers bestaande stereotypen moeten ontkrachten. In dit hoofdstuk onderzoek ik zowel het meemaken van positieve als negatieve gebeurtenissen op de houding naar etnische minderheden. Hiervoor gebruik ik retrospectieve data over de houding naar etnische minderheden over de levensloop van de respondenten van de Familie Enquête Nederlandse Bevolking 2003. Hierin werd gevraagd naar de huidige opvattingen over de aanwezigheid van etnische minderheden in Nederland, en de opvattingen toen de betreffende respondent 18, 30 en 50 jaar oud was. Om deze data te analyseren zijn groeicurve modellen gebruikt, die geschikt zijn om de veranderingen binnen een persoon in kaart te brengen. Er wordt dan gekeken hoe de –in dit geval- opvattingen van een persoon zich door de tijd heen ontwikkelen. In het vorige hoofdstuk was aangetoond met een panel dat retrospectieve data bruikbaar kunnen zijn om de effecten van bepaalde gebeurtenissen te bepalen.

Diezelfde paneldata worden in dit hoofdstuk opnieuw gebruikt. Ik laat zien dat bedreigd worden door een lid van een etnische minderheidsgroepering een positief effect

heeft op de mate van intolerantie naar etnische minderheden in het algemeen, zowel met de paneldata, als met de retrospectieve data. Ook blijken de positieve ervaringen van op bezoek gaan bij een allochtoon, of een gemengd huwelijk bijwonen, gematigd negatieve effecten te hebben op de mate van intolerantie naar etnische minderheden. Hoewel de verschillende vormen van ontmoetingen met leden van een andere etnische groep dus de verwachte effecten bleken te hebben op de mate van intolerantie naar deze groepen, weten we niet hoeveel van elk soort ontmoeting zich voordoet in de Nederlandse samenleving, en ook niet in welke combinaties. Wel zullen interetnische ontmoetingen vaker voorkomen als de groepsgroottes van etnische minderheden toenemen. Om te begrijpen welke de uitwerkingen zijn van de interetnische contacten is meer inzicht nodig in omvang en aard van de contacten in de Nederlandse samenleving. Ik vermoed bovendien dat negatieve ervaringen een grotere impact kunnen hebben op het intolerantieniveau van een samenleving omdat dergelijke ervaringen vaker zullen worden gedeeld met bekenden. Negatieve ervaringen worden, in andere woorden, vaker doorverteld dan positieve ontmoetingen, en kunnen daardoor de mening van meerdere mensen beïnvloeden.

Hoofdstuk 7 Persoonlijke ervaringen met homoseksuelen en hun timing over de levensloop

In dit laatste empirische hoofdstuk onderzoek ik wat er gebeurt met intolerantie naar homoseksualiteit als homoseksuelen het persoonlijke netwerk van iemand binnenkomen. De intolerantie naar homoseksualiteit is zeer sterk afgenomen in Nederland, wat waarschijnlijk als gevolg heeft gehad dat homoseksuelen zich vaker openlijk durfden te uiten. Tegelijk kan het juist een toename in openlijke homoseksualiteit zijn geweest die mede de afname in intolerantie veroorzaakt heeft.

Met behulp van retrospectieve data en groeicurve modellen heb ik onderzocht hoe intolerantie naar homoseksualiteit verandert onder invloed van persoonlijke contacten; wanneer een lid van de vriendenkring of de familie homoseksueel blijkt te zijn. Bovendien wordt in dit hoofdstuk de vraag gesteld of de effecten van het meemaken van een coming out voor iedereen hetzelfde is, of dat in aansluiting op de literatuur jongeren eerder hun mening ten aanzien van homoseksualiteit herzien dan ouderen. Zowel het hebben van een familielid dat bekendmaakt dat hij of zij homoseksueel is, als een vriend of vriendin die homoseksueel blijkt te zijn, hebben een negatieve invloed op de intolerantie naar homoseksualiteit. Respondenten die een dergelijke ervaring hebben gehad, denken daarna positiever over homoseksualiteit. Maar er is wel een verschil tussen jongeren en ouderen als het gaat om het krijgen van een homoseksuele vriend of vriendin. Voor jongere mensen verandert dit de opvattingen over homoseksualiteit wel, maar voor ouderen niet meer. Dit verschil bestaat niet als het gaat om het krijgen van een homoseksueel familielid. Ouderen en jongeren veranderen dan evenveel van houding. De stabiliteit van attitudes op latere leeftijd is hier dus relatief. Als de gebeurtenis maar ingrijpend genoeg

is, namelijk het krijgen van een homoseksueel familielid, blijken ouderen net zo in staat tot het veranderen van houding als jongeren.

Hoofdstuk 8 Conclusies

In dit laatste hoofdstuk worden de bevindingen uit de vorige hoofdstukken samengevat, en wordt teruggekeken naar de vraag waarmee dit proefschrift begon. Hoe kunnen de veranderingen in intolerantie in Nederland naar euthanasie, homoseksualiteit en etnische minderheden worden verklaard? Ouders zijn aardig succesvol als het gaat om het overdragen van hun intolerantie op hun kinderen. Toch leidt dit niet tot stabiliteit in intolerantie op samenlevingsniveau. Dit komt doordat ouders verschillen in het aantal kinderen dat zij krijgen, en de timing daarvan, maar ook door andere factoren. Een belangrijke verklaring voor de verandering in houding naar homoseksualiteit en euthanasie bleek te liggen in de veranderingen in de samenstelling van de Nederlandse bevolking met betrekking tot religiositeit. Doordat minder mensen religieus zijn in 2000 en daarna dan in 1970, zijn de opvattingen van de Nederlandse bevolking naar beide toleranter geworden. De mate van intolerantie naar etnische minderheden bleek minder goed te kunnen worden verklaard door veranderingen in compositie van de bevolking. Hier bleken specifieke historische omstandigheden belangrijker. Opvallend is verder dat voor alle drie de onderwerpen van deze studie, de mensen geboren tussen 1931 en 1954 het meest tolerant bleken te zijn.

De alternatieve verklaring die ik opperde in het eerste hoofdstuk van dit boek, was dat persoonlijke ervaringen de mate van intolerantie kunnen veranderen op het individuele niveau. Dit bleek ook het geval te zijn. Zowel opvattingen over etnische minderheden, als over homoseksualiteit bleken te worden aangepast onder invloed van persoonlijke ervaringen met allochtonen en homoseksuelen. Ik ben echter niet in staat om te toetsen of deze persoonlijke ervaringen bij elkaar opgeteld een verandering teweeg brachten in de geaggregeerde opvattingen op samenlevingsniveau. Het lijkt redelijk te verwachten dat de incidentie van dergelijke ervaringen sinds 1970 is toegenomen, maar om een betere toets uit te kunnen voeren is een prospectief design noodzakelijk.
Tot slot geef ik nog enkele richtingen aan voor vervolgonderzoek. Hierbij vind ik het van belang dat toekomstig onderzoek naar de overdracht van opvattingen binnen gezinnen de context waarin die gezinnen leven in beschouwing neemt. Onder sommige historische omstandigheden, bijvoorbeeld een economische crisis, zou die overdracht wel eens moeizamer kunnen verlopen dan in andere omstandigheden. Ten tweede vind ik dat meer onderzoek zou moeten worden gedaan naar de bruikbaarheid van retrospectieve attitude metingen in surveys. Het doen van prospectief onderzoek verdient weliswaar de voorkeur, maar is zo tijd- en kostenintensief dat gegevens over dertig jaar moeilijk te verzamelen zijn. Tot slot stel ik dat gekeken zou moeten worden wat de gevolgen zijn van de veranderingen in intolerantie voor de leden van de betrokken groepen, en de relatie tussen groepen.

Curriculum Vitae

Eva Jaspers was born in 1975 in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. She started her undergraduate studies in Sociology at Radboud University Nijmegen in 1998, obtaining her Master's degree in Sociology *cum laude* in 2003. She then followed a doctoral program at the Interuniversity Center for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS) at Radboud University Nijmegen, where she conducted the present research from 2003 to 2008. Ms Jaspers took didactic courses that led to a certificate of University Teacher at the IOWO, Nijmegen. Between October and December 2005 she spent a research period at Pennsylvania State University, working with professor Duane F. Alwin on retrospective attitude measurements. Currently she holds a position as Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology / ICS of Radboud University Nijmegen.

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